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GADGETS / GAMES / GEAR

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HEADPHONE SUPERTEST

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PLUS!

Tested: Apple iPad Air

Asus Space Edition laptop

Nintendo Switch Sports verdict

Instant Upgrade: Samsung Z Fold3



Issue 118
June/July 2022
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trails



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WELCOME

M meet my new friend Spot. His proud owner, Jamie Van Schoor of Dwyka Mining, introduced us. Spot's agile, loyal, kind of charming, and dog-like enough that other dogs instinctively sniff his bum when they meet him. He works in mines, up to 4km below the surface, carrying cameras and sensors to analyse gases or inspect equipment. He's the first electronic dog I've met and I'm way impressed. For home use, though, I'm going to stick with traditional internal-combustion dogs. For now.

The risk of imports

You look to *Stuff* for news on the latest gadgets and where to get them. Often they're so new that they're not yet available in South Africa. In that case, we list the manufacturer's website or an international supplier. A reader recently wrote to us pointing out that if a product's bought

overseas, the local agents usually won't cover the guarantee. That's one of the risks of buying from overseas, and we should point that out. And where necessary we'll specify when products are "import only".

This is our winter issue, so you're expecting all kinds of tech you can curl up on the sofa with, right? Forget it. The whole world has been cooped up inside for two years and we're not wasting another three months in pyjamas. *Stuff* is getting out there, and you're coming with us.

We've brought you all the tech you need to hike, camp, bike and run yourself fit. We've also included a comprehensive 14-page Headphones Buying Guide and packed the mag with nearly 200 gadgets.

And you're holding it all in your hands right now. Get stuck in. **S**

Charles Boffard, Editor
charles@stuff.co.za

Making Stuff up
Publisher and Editor-in-chief
Toby Shapshak
toby@stuff.co.za

Editor
Charles Boffard
charles@stuff.co.za

Digital Editor
Brett Venter
brett@stuff.co.za

Art Director
Brandon van Rensburg
art@stuff.co.za

Digital Publisher
Nic Boerma
nic@stuff.co.za

Stuff Journalist
Duncan Pike
duncan@stuff.co.za

Stuff Journalist
Carla Mouton
carla@stuff.co.za

Selling Stuff
Business Director
Sally Hudson,
sally@stuff.co.za

Senior Account Manager
Thalia Pallotta
083 375 2418
thalia@stuff.co.za

Getting Stuff to you
Printing
CTP

Distribution
On the Dot
087 353 1291

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Advertising
Business director
Sally Hudson
sally@stuff.co.za

Senior account manager
Thalia Pallotta
083 375 2418
thalia@stuff.co.za

Management
Stuff South Africa is published by the Stuff Group (Pty) Ltd. Directors: Toby Shapshak, Sally Hudson

PO Box 74,
Melrose Arch, 2096

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... and imports

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or make the best of
existing tech? No
matter your budget,
each issue has you
covered.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN EVERY ISSUE

1 Smart Tech

Stuff Mag examines the very best in the world of tech on 10 times a year. Whether it's freshly launched (love that new-processor smell), of historic importance, or just a twinkle in Jony Ive's eye, you can bet that we've left our fingerprints on it in our quest to catch and catalogue the best in tech. We do it all for you.

● Visit *Stuff*:
stuff.co.za

2 Test Match

We test phones, laptops, tablets, headphones, cars, and anything else that recently appeared in a tech keynote so you don't have to. No tech is too big or too small (except when it is – it happens) for us to poke, pick at, prod, or play with. And we pass the results on to you, for better-informed gadget purchase choices.

● Image *Stuff*:
[instagram.com/stuffsa](https://www.instagram.com/stuffsa)

3 List Value

Looking for a quick comparison of the very best tech available right this second? *Stuff*'s Top 10 pages collect and collate the gear you want in an easy-to-compare format. The top item in each list is the best of the best in its category – from phones to laptops to cameras, Bluetooth speakers to headphones to VR to games, it's all there.

● Tweet *Stuff*:
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4 Home Grown

Want your *Stuff* direct from the source? We've got it available on our own storefront, right on the *Stuff* website for **R30** a pop. Even better, previous issues are also present, at just **R20** an issue. At the risk of sounding like an infomercial, we've cut out the middle-man and passed the savings on to you.

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5 Alternate Mirror

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SUBS
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30%
OFF

OUR PRINT
ISSUE

p3

H

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Moof your body

The S5 is suited to anybody between 1.64m and 2.06m, but there's also an A5 (same price) with a step-in frame and smaller 24in wheels for anybody who's a bit shorter.

HOT
FIVE
#1



MOOF ON UP

VanMoof S5

There are many areas where Amsterdam leads the world, some of them not suited to the pages of a family magazine, but one wholesome activity where the Dutch capital definitely excels is cycling. In fact, there are more bikes there than people... and VanMoof seems to have just tipped the balance even further in favour of the two-wheelers.

This is the S5, and it isn't just any old boneshaker. Its three-speed Gen 5 motor is supposed to offer VanMoof's smoothest ride yet, while the 487Wh battery gives a range of up to 150km. Such a desirable steed will be catnip to thieves, but the S5 has a built-in lock and alarm, plus it's compatible with Apple's Find My system.

Everything's integrated into the frame, including a new Halo Ring interface that uses LED lights on the handlebars to show you the current battery status, assist level and speed. There's also a powered mount for your phone and an app that shows directions and tracks your rides. You'd have to be high on Amsterdam's finest not to want one.

As hot as... a big night out in Amsterdam
R46 000 (import) / vanmoof.com



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ALL THE
BIGGEST
STORIES FROM
PLANET TECH



Keep on Moofin'

If you want to extend the S5's range you'll be able to buy a click-on 463Wh battery (Rtba) that weighs a hefty 3.66kg but will add up to 140km of assisted riding.

Bust a Moof

Need a bit of help to get off the line quickly at those busy traffic lights? A Turbo Boost button on the handlebars gives you an extra injection of acceleration when you need it.



Show me
the weigh

Opt for the M1 Ultra version and you get Thunderbolt 4 ports on the front instead of USB-C. It also adds nearly a kilo to the weight, coming in at 3.6kg rather than 2.7kg.

HOT
FIVE
#2HOLEY MOTHER
Apple Mac Studio

When people reach for a stick to beat Apple with, it's usually the one marked 'form over function'. How else do you explain the decision to ditch the headphone socket from the iPhone or lose almost all the ports from the MacBook Air? With the Mac Studio, though, Apple has prioritised function so much that it looks more like a fancy server than a computer.

For starters, it's absolutely riddled with ports, slots and sockets. There are 13 in total, including two USB-C and an SD card reader on the front plus four Thunderbolt 4, two USB-A, Gigabit Ethernet and HDMI on the back. And you'll need them, because this is the most powerful machine Apple has ever built.

There are two chip configurations: the M1 Max, which comes with a 10-core CPU, 24-core GPU and 32GB of RAM, or the M1 Ultra, which doubles everything (including the price). Opt for the latter and you're getting a machine that's 50% faster than the Mac Pro, but both can be upgraded. Throw in up to 8TB of storage and Wi-Fi 6, and this little silver box is pretty much the ultimate marriage of form and function.

As hot as... your old PC trying to keep up
from R38 000 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

Height for your right to porty

Measuring 9.5cm from base to top, the Mac Studio is about the size of two stacked Mac Minis. Well, how else do you expect it to fit all those ports and that extra grunt?

And your buds can sing

The Mac Studio includes a built-in speaker and there's also a headphone port on the back. That's not ideal placement, but you can always use Bluetooth 'phones instead.

ALSO ANNOUNCED...



APPLE STUDIO DISPLAY

At 27in, the 5K Studio Display is almost twice the size of the largest MacBook screen, plus it comes with its own A13 Bionic chip (as found in the iPhone 11) to manage the onboard 12MP camera, mics and speakers.

from R42 000 / macshack.co.za



APPLE iPhone SE (2022)

With its 4.7in screen and Touch ID home button, the cheapest iPhone might look the same on the outside, but it now comes with 5G and a top-end A15 Bionic chip. Apple reckons the battery will last longer too.

R9 800 / incredible.co.za

HOT STUFF



**A hazy shade
of wristwear**

Other colours available include a sunny yellow, a watery dark blue for Neptune and a Martian red; Mercury is dark grey and Uranus is light blue (but we won't tell anyone).

**Let's
go rippin'**

Each watch comes with a Velcro strap — a nod to the crew of Apollo 11, who all wore Speedmasters on their moon trip. Metal clasps and spacesuit gloves just don't get on.

**Glowing
up in public**

The watch's 42mm case is asymmetrical like the original, while luminous markers mean you can read it in the dark. On the back, the battery cover depicts the relevant heavenly body.

HOT
FIVE
#3

BOTH SIDES OF THE STARRY

**Omega x Swatch
Speedmaster MoonSwatch**

When people started camping outside shops around the world it used to mean there was a new iPhone about to go on sale (or, more recently, a new virus going round and selfish morons wanted to stockpile toilet roll). But that's nothing compared to what went down when the first batch of Speedmaster MoonSwatch watches were made available.

Thousands mobbed Swatch stores in London, Las Vegas and Kuala Lumpur, and at least one arrest was made in Geneva... but then Switzerland is very dull. It's easy to see what all the fuss is about, though.

The R4 000 timepiece is based on Omega's Speedmaster Moonwatch, which would normally set you back circa R100 000, with each of the 11 models in the set named after a different celestial body.

The bioceramic case houses a quartz engine rather than the automatic movement of the full-price Omega, but all models come with the Speedmaster logo. And those people who wasted hours queuing up to buy one and missed out?

The joke's on them, because these watches aren't even a limited edition.

**As hot as... a mission to the sun
R4 000 (import) / swatch.com**



**Breath at
one's elbow**

There are touch controls that allow you to start and stop playback, adjust the volume and summon your phone's voice assistant, while the app handles EQ tweaks.

HOT
FIVE
#4

BREATH OR GLORY**Sennheiser Sport
True Wireless**

It's very easy to get distracted when you're supposed to be exercising. Did you shut that window? What's for tea tonight? Are there more doors or wheels in existence on the planet right now? Ah, but what about all the little ones on toy cars, do they count?

See what we mean? And it's not just your brain that tries to put you off your stride: sometimes even the sound of your own footsteps or breathing can be distracting. Sennheiser's latest fitness-friendly buds can fix that. Rather than using active noise-cancelling tech, you choose from two types of adapter: 'Open' minimises bodily noises but still allows you to hear what's going on around you, while 'Closed' aims to seal out everything.

With 7mm dynamic drivers and support for codecs including aptX, SBC and AAC they should sound pretty sweet, plus you can fiddle with the tone using the in-app equaliser. Battery life is a respectable 9hrs, with 18 more in the case, while an IP54 rating means they won't mind getting soaked in sweat. Oh, and the answer's definitely wheels. Or maybe it's doors...

As hot as... the doors vs wheels debate
R13 850 / wantitall.co.za

**Breath of a
disco dancer**

At 6.8g each they're quite chunky as far as in-ear buds go, but you probably won't get away with blaming them for slowing you down.

The charging case weighs 42g.

**With a little
help from my lens**

The Nreal Airs come with a special frame that means you can fit them with your own prescription lenses. No more having to wear one pair of glasses on top of another.



**HOT
FIVE
#5**

THE BEST IS LORGNETTE TO COME

Nreal Air

If Google Glass had looked like a pair of Wayfarers rather than a rejected prop for a '90s *Star Trek* movie, we might all be wandering around wearing AR glasses by now. Instead, Google's ill-fated wearable ended up as the butt of a bunch of jokes and our faces remain unadorned with smart glasses – but maybe 2022 is the year that changes.

At least that's what EE seems to think, because it's bringing Nreal's Air specs to the UK. The two 3840x1080 OLED displays inside will make it look like you have a massive 20in screen 6m in front of your eyes; it can be positioned in virtual space and combined with head-tracking for a full AR experience, while Air Casting mode mirrors your phone screen. Sound is tackled by two speakers built into the arms, plus there are dual mics so you can also use your specs to make calls (if you can put up with looking a bit crazy while doing so). Hook up a Bluetooth controller, fire up Google Stadia over 5G and your lunch breaks will disappear in a flash.

As hot as... staring at the sun from 6m
Rtba / ee.co.uk



IN SPACE NO ONE CAN PEER AT YOUR SCREEN

Asus Zenbook 14X OLED Space Edition

R28 000 / asus.com

Like any space station this laptop has plenty of ports, including two Thunderbolt 4 and one HDMI 2.0.



Got a trip into outer space coming up? Asus has just the laptop for you...

● Intel-stellar overdrive

Astronauts go through rigorous training ahead of their missions, but you don't have to be destined for orbit to crave one of these special-edition Zenbooks. With a 12th-gen Intel Core i9 H-series CPU, optional Intel X graphics and up to 32GB of LPDDR5 RAM, the 14X OLED Space Edition won't need boosters to cope with a few spreadsheets onboard the 7:55 to Planet Rat Race. Plus its 14in 2.8K 90Hz OLED screen and Dolby Atmos audio should be more than

capable of keeping you entertained on re-entry to suburbia.

● Tiny glancer

Launched to mark the 25th anniversary of the first Asus laptop being sent into space, the Space Edition has a few features that set it apart from the standard Zenbook 14X. Most notable is the 3.5in OLED screen on the outside, which you can set to deliver smart notifications without flipping the lid, show natty planetary animations, or display your name and contact info, just in case that's policy at your particular space agency. This laptop also comes in a special livery called Zero-G

Titanium — though it can't actually defy Newton's laws, and nor is it made from the lightweight metal.

● Drop in the name of love

That lack of titanium doesn't mean the 14X OLED Space Edition is too heavy to leave terra firma, though. At 15.9mm slim and 1.4kg light its payload isn't too porky, and Asus has put it through space-grade testing to ensure it can withstand life on a planet with such strong gravitational forces as ours. That means it's drop-proof and can also deal with extreme vibrations. And it works at temperatures from -24°C to 61°C, so trips to other worlds aren't out of the question.

**YOU CAN SET
THE 3.5in OLED
SCREEN ON
THE OUTSIDE
TO DELIVER
NOTIFICATIONS**



GADGETS FROM SPACE

● Omega Speedmaster

Certified by NASA for all manned space missions in 1965 – the only watch to receive that distinction – the Omega Speedmaster was worn on the Moon by Buzz Aldrin.

● Apple iPhone 4

Apple doesn't just make its gadgets in Space Grey: in 2011 it sent a couple of iPhones up to the International Space Station to go with the iPods they already had on board.

● Asus P6100

In 1997 a pair of Asus P6100 laptops were chosen to be used on Russia's Mir space station, spending more than 600 days in orbit without falling to the dreaded blue screen of death.



Watch out VODACOM LINEA

Vodacom's Linea watch is two things – it's a wristwatch, and it's a panic button. Fall, or otherwise find yourself in the poo, and you can make use of the Vodacom Smart SIM support to send an alert to up to five trusted contacts. The message is sent via SMS and includes a GPS location link that'll remain live for 30 minutes. Fairly handy, if you need it. You might never need it at all, but wouldn't you regret not having one if you did. As far as other functions go, it's a watch. It has an IP65 rating. It tells the time. It helps folks find you in an emergency. What more do you want?

R500 / vodacom.co.za



Dinning around RAZER LEVIATHAN V2

Most soundbars would look ridiculous sitting on a desk below your monitor – as if you'd accidentally shrunk the screen in the wash. But what Razer doesn't know about the needs of PC gamers would fit on the back of one of its textured thumb-grips. Despite being designed for desktop use, the 65W Leviathan V2 manages to squeeze in two full-range drivers, two tweeters and two passive radiators (plus a separate down-firing sub), along with Razer's usual Chroma RGB lighting with 18 customisable zones, so you can make sure it ties in with the rest of your setup. It also supports THX Spatial Audio, so you should be able to hear exactly where those shots are coming from.

R4 600 (import) / razer.com



Just like the Wind, only quieter

UNDER ARMOUR FLOW VELOCITI WIND 2

If you're looking to shave a few seconds from your PB, then Under Armour might have just what you're looking for. The brand's new Flow Velociti Wind 2 running shoes hope to take some of that weight off your shoulders. Well, feet. The shoes themselves have had their rubber outsole removed, eliminating some of the weight you're dragging around. Material changes improve traction and breathability, plus the Velociti Wind 2s connect to MapMyRun, the app Under Armour scooped up a short while back. On-the-road feedback, in real time, is possible if you've got a set of wireless buds connected. Plus, expect all the usual device interoperability.

R3 500 / underarmour.co.za

Picture this...

FUJIFILM X-S10

Fuji makes some mighty kit, but the best of it can be a touch expensive. Happily, there's plenty of quality to be found at the lower end of the price range. If you can call 'just under R20k' lower end. The X-S10 packs a decent set of features in for not much money – a 26.1MP APS-C sensor, five-axis in-body stabilisation, and the ability to shoot 4K video at 30fps and HD at a splendid 240fps are just the start. Fuji's X-Processor 4 image processor (what did you think it did?) helps ramp up low-light performance. Handy, since Eskom's been so bent on keeping us all in the dark.

R17 000 / fujifilm.co.za



Take a Zen attitude to work

ASUS ZENBOOK PRO 14 DUO (UX8402Z)

If you're a creative looking for a unique machine, Asus has the device you've always wanted. But expect to pay for the privilege. The Zenbook Pro 14 Duo offers users two absolutely glorious displays – one 14in 2 880 x 1800 one, and then a 2 880 x 864 secondary, both featuring stunning OLED panels. For video editing or similar creative work, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better all-in-one Windows solution. Then there's the rest of the spec. Intel's Core i9-12900H, 32GB of RAM and 1TB of solid-state storage round out the internals, plus there's an RTX3050 GPU in there. The only downside? The keyboard and trackpad are a little cramped, to make room for that second, angled screen.

R45 000 / asus.com/za



Time to regain your Honor?

HONOR X8

If you're a Huawei fan but really like the Apple aesthetic, then Honor has just the phone for you. The X8 bears a very strong resemblance to the American brand's devices, but it's packed with the sort of hardware you'd be familiar with from Huawei's glory days. There's one more thing it has as well... what was it? Oh, yes, the Android OS is the full-fat thing. So, all of Google's beloved bits and pieces are inside, watching everything you do and everywhere you go... wait, why is this a good idea again? Oh, right. Gmail, and Google Maps. Seriously, though, this mid-ranger is pretty slick.

R5 000 / hihonor.com



A power station that works

ENERGIZER MAX POWER STATION

You know how it is. You've got a deadline, but Eskom has other ideas. You could drive to the office, or a coffee shop, or somewhere else with power, or you could plug your router into the Energizer Max Power Station. It accepts USB-C (and features 60W Power Delivery), USB-A (with an 18W charge speed) or a South African two-point plug. So almost anything with that plug will run on this 230Wh, 72 000mAh battery pack. There's enough juice inside to run a fan for eight hours or so, or your internet for most of a 24-hour cycle, with room to spare to top up your tablet.

R5 000 / loot.co.za



That's quite the Pad, Mate

HUAWEI MATEPAD T 10S

Let's start with the bad news – no, you still won't have native access to Google Mobile Services on this 10.1in tablet. But the IPS panel is clear and bright, Huawei's given it a batch of snazzy Kirin-powered internals, and there's plenty of battery and storage to help stave off Eskom-mandated boredom. Expect up to five hours of intense usage from the 5100mAh battery – enough to skip load shedding entirely – while the MatePad T 10s also has 64GB of space to fill. If you're horrible at choosing your Netflix downloads, you can expand this by up to 512GB via microSD. Throw in a pretty decent reading mode and you're looking at one affordable slate (which wasn't made by Apple).

R4 500 / huawei.co.za



OLYMPIAN MOTORS 01

R1.6 million (import) / olympianmotors.com

Dick Tracy called. He wants his car back.

Did he use his two-way watch radio? That guy really was ahead of his time. And though the 01 might look like it's stuck in the past with its swooping wheel arches, striking grille, DB5-style headlights and spindly rims, there's a thoroughly modern electric car underneath. While fellow Californian EV maker Tesla's quality control issues are well known, Olympian Motors

claims to use the finest sustainable materials in its cars – including exotic woods, steel, cashmere and silk – over a frame of titanium and military-grade carbon fibre.

What about under the bonnet?

Olympian might be all about style and experience over performance and power, but it's no slouch. The real-wheel-drive 01 generates 310hp, giving it a 0–100 time of 5.7secs – the same as a Lotus

Elise Sport – and a top speed of over 250km/h. Its 82kWh battery also boasts the world's highest energy density, meaning a range of 450km per charge. That's nearly 160km less than you'd get out of a Tesla Model S, but you can't put a price on not giving Elon Musk any of your money.

And inside?

While most modern motors have dozens of knobs, buttons, levers

and switches inside, the 01 has just 30 – but that doesn't mean there's no in-car tech here. The cockpit is powered by Olympian's own voice-controlled operating system (OOS), while the infotainment screen has been scrapped entirely in favour of a head-up display built into the windscreen. Well, you already spend all day looking at glowing displays – wouldn't it be nice to get a break when you're driving your car?

IT HAS THE SAME
0-100 TIME AS
A LOTUS ELISE
SPORT AND A
TOP SPEED OF
OVER 257km/h





The (environmentally) sound of music URBANEARS BOO

Like the world's waterways, your lugholes are no place for plastic waste. But if you are going to fill your ear canals with old rubbish, make sure it comes in the form of these eco-friendly AirPods alternatives, which are made from 97% recycled plastic. With a splash-resistant casing that's constructed from discarded bottles and old air-con units, they give discarded detritus a chance to be heard thanks to 12mm drivers, Bluetooth 5.2, noise-filtering mics and touch controls. Battery life is a respectable 4.5hrs, with a further 25.5hrs in the charging case, and they come in three colours: Charcoal Black, Almost Green or Slightly Blue. Perfect for soundtracking your next beach clean-up.

R1400 (import) / urbanears.com



Mouse of the rising thumb LOGITECH LIFT

It might look like a fancy travel iron, but if your problem is wrist-knack rather than creased holiday threads, Logitech's 'vertical ergonomic' mouse is worth getting your hand on. With this tall pointer in your grasp (it's available for both righties and lefties), your forearm rests at a more natural 57° angle – a bit like shaking somebody's hand – which is supposed to take pressure off your wrist. Because nobody should ever be injured by a spreadsheet. It comes with a USB connector dongle but there's also Bluetooth onboard so it works with Macs, PCs, Android and iOS, with a single AA battery enough to keep it going for up to two whole years. Just try to remember not to fill it with water.

R1400 (import) / logitech.com



↓ DROP EVERYTHING & DOWNLOAD

Knotwords

from Free / Android, iOS, PC, Mac

Bored of *Wordle*? Done with *Quordle* but not quite ready for the 32 five-letter boards you have to solve simultaneously in *Duotrigordle*? *Knotwords* might look like a crossword, but you won't find any clues here – at least not of the cryptic kind. Each board is split into zones with a specific set of letters that can be used in each one. Your task is to use those letters to fill the grid with the correct words. Sounds easy, right? But like an alphabet-based *Sudoku*, everything has to fit in all directions. As with *Wordle* there's a new free-to-play puzzle every day, but an in-app purchase gives you access to more, including an archive of past ones you might've missed. Get on board, before it does what all these things do and takes the world by storm.



FINAL SHOT



FIRST PLAY CURSED TO GOLF PC, XSX, XB1, Switch

Dying is one hell of a handicap. And that's what happens here to your budding golfer, who is struck by lightning and doomed to an eternity spent in golfing purgatory. It's quite the setup for *Cursed To Golf*, a charming side-scrolling roguelike (or golf-like) where you have to successfully complete 18 rounds to escape the afterlife.

The side-on perspective makes this feel more like a turn-based platformer than a sport sim, with the 16-bit pixel art to match – although it also means you're going to end up

spending longer on a run than you normally would in *Hades* or *Dead Cells*.

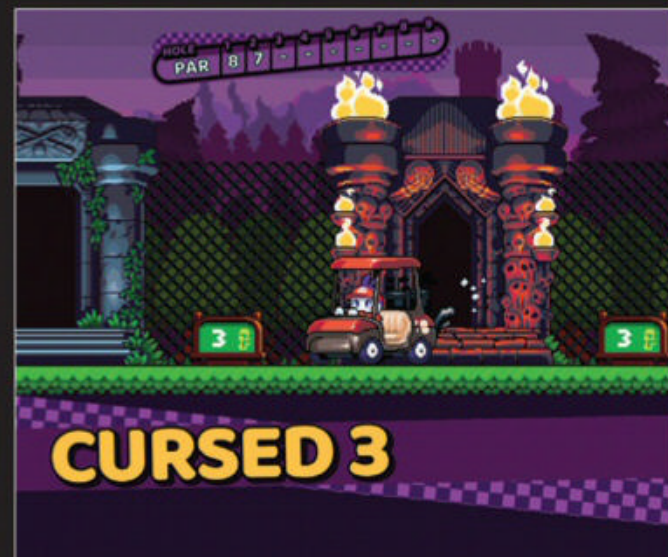
But the golfing fundamentals are all present as you select between driver, iron and wedge to make your shots across a variety of devious levels. And while there are bunkers to watch out for, you've also got portals and TNT, which can be hazards but also shortcuts.

Did we mention you've only got five shots to make it to the hole (or smash certain statues to be awarded more shots), otherwise you're dragged all

the way back to the beginning? And each course completely changes its layout and obstacles when you restart. Mean!

Fortunately, collecting and using skill cards will help tip the odds in your favour, whether that's getting a free practice shot, changing the properties of your ball in mid-flight or even piloting it around corners.

Even without skill cards, you can do some pretty wild spins to get the ball a little closer to where you want it. And you'll need to make use of all these tricks in the one-on-one boss matches.



FIRST LOOK MARISSA: DON'T MISS 'ER



IMMORTALITY

PC, XSX, XB1

Once a ridiculed '90s fad, the FMV game – which combines live-action performances with interactive elements – has had a healthy renaissance thanks to better production values, better acting and better writing. And we largely have to thank indie dev Sam

Barlow, who paved the way with his 2016 Bafta-winning debut *Her Story*.

His ambitions with this genre have only grown since then, with multiple characters, locations and timelines in 2019's *Telling Lies*. But while Barlow's new project appears to dial back to focus on one character – a mysterious actress named Marissa Marcel

who first made her film debut in the 1960s and has now gone missing – *Immortality* is even larger and wilder.

This single game is actually made up of three movies (filmed in 1968, 1970 and 1999) in which Marcel starred, but which were never released. As with Barlow's previous games, you view this footage in fragments and out of order,

and some scenes may just be B-roll. Even more ingenious is that the way to uncover more scenes is by using the clever cinematic technique of match cuts.

So whatever happened to Marissa Marcel? You'll be able to find out for yourself when the game comes out this winter, including on Game Pass.

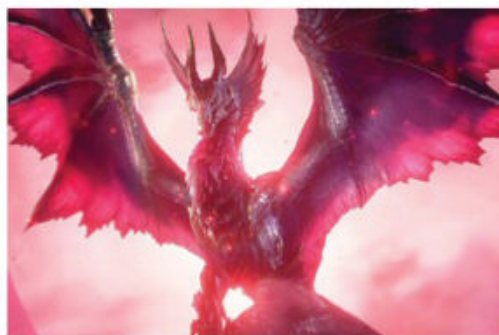
BEST OF NEW GAMES FROM JAPAN TO GET HYPED FOR



EXOPRIMAL

PS5, PS4, XSX, XB1, PC

Dinosaurs are pouring down from a portal in the sky (yes, really), wreaking havoc on a near-future Earth. Well, they would, wouldn't they? It's up to your elite team of exosuit pilots to work together, seal the portals and blow those monsters back to the Jurassic age.



MONSTER HUNTER RISE: SUNBREAK

Switch, PC

Last year's monster hit is gearing up for a massive expansion on 30 June, taking hunters from the Japanese-inspired Kamura Village to the new land of Elgado, with more fearsome beats to overcome... including headlining dragon Malzeno.



THE DIOFIELD CHRONICLE

PS5, PS4, XSX, XB1, Switch, PC

The 'Dio' part of the title alludes to how you appear to be looking over a diorama as you martial your forces in Square Enix's new strategy RPG, where battles unfold in real time – though we expect more tactical decision-making than simply hacking and slashing.

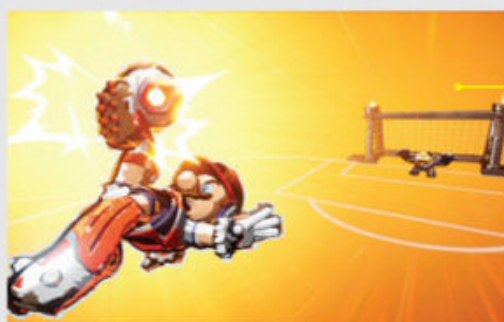
INCOMING

JUNE

- FIRE EMBLEM WARRIORS: THREE HOPES
- MARIO STRIKERS: BATTLE LEAGUE FOOTBALL
- CAPCOM FIGHTING COLLECTION
- THE QUARRY
- LEGO BRAWLS (CONSOLE VERSION)
- CUPHEAD: THE DELICIOUS LAST COURSE

JULY

- KLONOA PHANTASY REVERIE SERIES
- LIVE A LIVE



Lotus Eletre

SUV COMES QUICKLY

Inside there's a 15.1in touchscreen plus a head-up display. Voice control, 5G and over-the-air updates complete the tech picture.



R2 million (import) / lotuscars.com

NEWS DASHBOARD

It's almost as if Lotus had built an SUV! Unthinkable, of course...

Everybody loves a Lotus – though judging by the reaction on social media, not everybody is sold on them making a big old family car. Actually billed as a hyper-SUV, this is the first of three EVs planned by the legendary British brand, which is now Chinese-owned.

What's a hyper-SUV anyway?

That just means you can expect fast and furious performance to go with the stunning looks. Power output will start at 600bhp, with Lotus promising a 0–100km/h time of under 3secs and a max speed of 260km/h on the top-spec versions. Range should be in the region of 600km and it'll have a 350kW charge time of just 20 min.

Nippy. And where's all that power coming from?

The Eletre is based on a new 800v platform, with drive going from a

pair of motors on each axle to all four wheels. The motor, controller and reducer setup have all been rolled into one, reducing weight.

But aren't all SUVs heavy?

Yep, which is why it's taken the Lotus boffins plenty of time to work out what to ditch while designing everything else to be as light as possible. Using a wealth of innovative materials, with plenty of carbon fibre and aluminium, the car is also incredibly aerodynamic.

OK, but is this a 'proper' Lotus?

Well, look at those air-channelling openings below the headlights. Lotus has decades of knowledge in its locker, but its designers also know how to get the right look. A prime example is the wraparound LED lighting at the back, which changes colour to show charging. The Eletre will come in five versions: Range, Tour, Sport, Individual and, scarily, Off-Road.



AYGO WILD

From around R300k, Toyota's Aygo X is perfect as a first car, or for pootling around rammed city streets. The three-cylinder automatic is well suited to urban duties, but the manual is more fun to drive. Either way, it's cute and quite roomy thanks to being slightly wider and longer than the original Aygo.



HARLEY EVOLVED

Harley-Davidson's Serial 1 electric bike is finally available internationally. With just a whiff of the great American motorbike brand, the Rush/CTY model is certainly a premium steed. Its mid-drive motor offers Eco, Tour, Sport and Boost modes, while the 706Wh battery delivers a range of up to 185km.



#1 STEP BEYOND

Smart cars have always been tiny, but the Smart #1, er, isn't. But it's not huge either: as the company moves into all-electric territory this new model is a sort of mini-SUV. It's designed by Mercedes, with a panoramic sunroof, frameless doors and an air of refinement alongside the funky styling touches.



Holding out for a Vivo? GARMIN VIVOSMART 5

You don't have to be a heptathlete to want a record of your workouts, and not everybody needs Olympian-level detail from their wearable. Garmin's latest lightweight logger keeps things simple by just tracking running, cycling, swimming, yoga and gym work; but it can still record your blood oxygen, respiration, pulse and stress, alongside the usual monitoring of steps and sleep. Despite its slimline stylings, Garmin has made the OLED touchscreen 66% bigger than before, plus it's the first Vivosmart device to have interchangeable bands. With a battery that's good for seven days of sweaty living on a single charge, this is a fitness tracker you can set and forget.

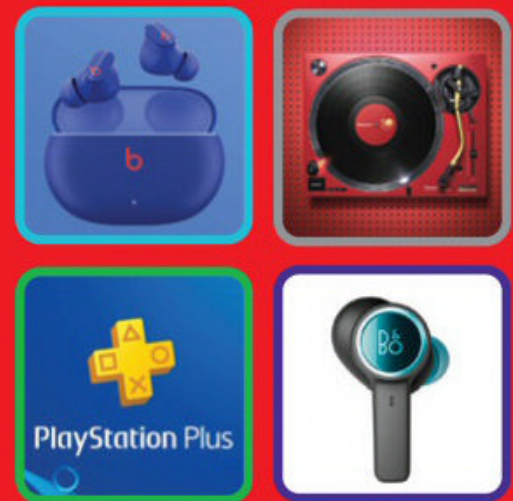
R2 600 / takealot.com



Hope you snikt in there WOLVERINE X HALO: THE MASTER CHIEF

Halo fan? Fond of sturdy foot ware? Have we got great (and awful) news for you. Wolverine, the footwear brand, has launched a Microsoft collaboration celebrating Master Chief, the iconic Spartan hero from the Halo game series. These won't improve your K/D ratio, but they're packed with limited features, including Master Chief's 117 designation and the United Nations Space Command emblem. The tricky bit? These are seriously limited edition, with only 117 available. By the time you read this, the only place you'll encounter these is heavily marked up on a reseller's website. Maybe. If you're lucky. Good luck, Spartan.

R3 600 (import) / wolverine.com



NEWS FEED

BEATS BUDS GET MORE ANDROID-FRIENDLY

Apple-owned Beats is adding some smarts to its Android app to make it more like using its buds with iOS: you'll now be able to use your non-iPhone to find your 'phones and change the ANC mode. The change applies to all products that work with the app, including the Studio Buds, which now come in three new colours.

TECHNICS MARKS 50 YEARS OF THE SL-1200 TURNTABLE

Technics' legendary turntable turns 50 this year, but rather than retiring to listen to some more age-appropriate music it's launched a limited-edition version. The SL-1200M7L comes in black, red, blue, white, green, yellow or beige, all with golden tonearms and engraved serial numbers, for R18 000.

SONY ADDS MORE FREE GAMES TO PS PLUS

Sony has added two new tiers to its PlayStation Plus online gaming service. For R240/m (or R1660/yr) you'll get access to 400 PS4 and PS5 games, while the R270/m (or R2 000/yr) Premium package includes an extra 340 PS3, PS2, PS1 and PSP games. It launches in June.

B&O STICKS IT TO APPLE WITH AIRPOD ALTERNATIVES

Bang & Olufsen had managed to resist the urge to give its true wireless buds the AirPods-style stem design — until now. The Beoplay EX in-ears come with large 9.2mm drivers and adaptive ANC and are fully waterproof... although they don't come in white. At R7 000, they'd better sound pretty special.

Stranger Things is coming back at last and here are some other new-to-streaming treats but we don't care because *Stranger Things*



Borgen: Power & Glory

Get used to pretending you can understand Danish again: this spinoff from the great Scandi political drama brings back a bunch of familiar faces. Birgitte Nyborg is appointed foreign minister just as a huge oilfield is discovered in Greenland and, with superpowers sniffing around, faces a delicate balancing act.

S5 / Netflix



The Essex Serpent

Based on the bestselling gothic novel, this miniseries sees Claire Danes' strong-minded London widow upping sticks and heading to the desolate fens of the titular county in search of the titular beast: according to superstitious locals, a giant snake is lurking in the salt marshes. Tom Hiddleston also stars (not as the snake).

S1 / Apple TV+



Obi-Wan Kenobi

Ewan McGregor is back in this long-awaited *Star Wars* series. In exile on the desert planet of Tatooine, Obi-Wan watches over the young Luke Skywalker amid the Empire's efforts to hunt the boy down. Hayden Christensen will also return as Anakin Skywalker – now presumably in full Darth Vader mode.

S1 / Disney+



The Boys

Arguably Amazon's best original series and certainly its most inventively foul-mouthed, *The Boys* is back in town (or at least on your telly). A show about a world of dysfunctional, murderous superheroes and the non-super humans who have vowed to take them down, it's brash, bloody, brutal and brilliant.

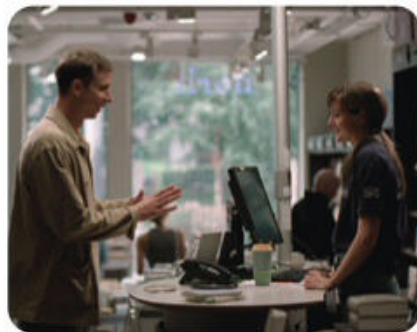
S3 / Prime Video



Hustle

Adam Sandler movies can go one of two ways, but we're hoping sports drama *Hustle* is more *Uncut Gems* than *Hubie Halloween*. He plays a washed-up basketball scout who unearths a rare talent and brings him back to the USA – without the approval of his team. Queen Latifah and Robert Duvall co-star.

Film / Netflix



The Worst Person in the World

Joachim Trier's drama offers a fresh perspective on the search for love, contentment and true purpose in life – “a coming-of-age film for grownups who feel like they still haven't grown up”, in the director's own words. Renate Reinsve puts in a scorching, manic lead performance.

Film / MUBI



Stranger Things **S4 / Netflix**

While convincing us that its stars are still schoolkids might be the new series' biggest challenge, let's face it: if there's more *Stranger Things* on the menu, we're going to be tucking in while blithely ignoring that they're all a foot taller than Winona now. Promising to lean more into its horror elements, this fourth season will be delivered in two batches: one now, and the other coming on 1 July. Guest stars include Robert Englund, best known for playing the 1980s' greatest horror movie villain: Freddy Krueger.







Some assembly required LEGO OPTIMUS PRIME

If you're looking for the next collector's piece for your display, how about an actual transformer? Lego will soon be bringing out a 1,508-piece model of Optimus Prime. It will measure 35cm tall and feature nineteen points of articulation. But this isn't just Optimus in his Autobot form, he'll also be able to transform into truck form while he's moseying about on Earth trying to 'blend in'. This one's gone a bit old school. Instead of the Peterbilt 379 cab from the Michael Bay movies, this will feature the G1 Optimus and the Freightliner FL86 cab.
Rtba / greatyellowbrick.co.za

Lightweight and zippy DJI MINI 3 PRO

The newest addition to DJI's range, the Mini 3 Pro is sporting a few juicy upgrades over its predecessor. The new 1/1.3in sensor will be able to shoot in full-res 48MP mode or a binned 12MP mode. It will manage 4K recording at 60fps, and 4K HDR at 30fps. You'll also be able to Tik Tok yourself, or whatever the kids say, with the three-axis gimbal, which can rotate vertically. There are also a few extra sensors to improve obstacle avoidance and support autonomous flight modes. All that in a 249g package seems almost too good to be true.
R15 500 (drone only) / droneworld.co.za



Light waves LUMEO PRO

The Lumeo proclaims itself the world's widest LED headlamp, offering 230° of bright, continuous illumination. The wide angle makes it more useful than narrow-beam headlamps for lots of indoor and outdoor activities – and for loadshedding. And there's none of that pushing buttons to cycle through modes that's so annoying with most headlamps. The Lumeo has a 'wave sensor', so you control it by waving your arms around it. Expect to see one on every DJ's head.
R500 / lumeo.co.za



Let me be your heady Air

Apple's skinniest tablet might look the same as the last one, but it's all shook up on the inside – making the 2022 model a serious alternative to the iPad Pro



from R11 500 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

We really loved the fourth-gen iPad Air when we reviewed it 18 months ago: it was like getting an iPad Pro on the cheap. But a lot can change in a year and a half.

Since then, the iPad Pro has further cemented its lead, the iPad Mini has turned into an Air that's been through a hot

wash – while gaining a few added features – and even the standard iPad has been given a selfie-camera system to embarrass the Air's.

Now the iPad Air is back. Hold the latest model in your mitts and you could easily confuse it for its predecessor, although the new colour options might give it away. But appearances

can be deceptive... because this latest iteration definitely isn't just more of the same.

That's because the new iPad Air has enough power packed inside of it to rival the flagship iPad Pro – and even quite a few current MacBooks. And though you might need to add a keyboard, a stylus and even a gamepad to make the most of

Apple's tablets these days, with each new evolution the idea of an iPad as a laptop replacement you can use for doing proper work (or play) is greeted with fewer and fewer scoffs.

So can this fifth-gen iPad Air tempt you away from a Pro? Or is it all style and no substance? We spent a week prodding away at one to find out.



1 Bezel in disguise

At 461g (462g with cellular) the new Air is only fractionally lighter than the 11in Pro, and it feels solid. Apple's been confident enough to omit a logo so it's all screen, with a black bezel. This design was sleek and modern in 2020 and it hasn't dated yet.

2 Good clockin' tonight

The iPad Air is now based around the same chip that's found in the iPad Pro and also a bunch of Macs. With 8GB of RAM it provides serious clout, deftly dealing with everything we threw at it – be that office drudgery, gaming or creative stuff.

3 Crying in the Apple

While the iPad app ecosystem is deeply impressive, holes remain in iPadOS. File management is slow compared to a desktop OS and multitasking feels like a work in progress. Connecting the Air to an external display is also a sub-optimal experience.

4 It's now or clever

If your onboard storage needs are quite low, the 64GB Air represents good value. Spec it up to 256GB, though, and you may as well buy the 11in Pro – which has ProMotion, Thunderbolt, Lidar and four-speaker audio, albeit with half the storage. Hmm...

5 The wonder of USB

Adding 5G costs an extra but all models get latest-gen Wi-Fi and a USB-C port. That speeds up data transfer, which is handy if you have the 64GB Air and regularly offload large files to an external drive, but is no match for the Pro's Thunderbolt port.

24 hours with the 2022 iPad Air

● Good
● Meh
● Evil





Techspecs

Display 10.9in 2360x1640 IPS touchscreen
Processor Apple M1 **RAM** 8GB **OS** iPadOS 15
Storage 64/256GB **Connectivity** USB-C, Wi-Fi 6, Bluetooth 5.0 **Cameras** 12MP front, 12MP rear **Battery life** Up to 10hrs **Dimensions** 248x179x6.1mm, 461g

Return to splendour?

Let's have a little more conversation about the screen, speakers and cameras Apple has fitted to this tablet



Love me render

There's no change to the 10.9in display. It's bright, has supremely accurate colours, and doesn't turn into a mirror in the sun. You don't get ProMotion, though, so scrolling isn't as smooth as on the Pro.



Sound dog

Audio output from the Air's stereo speakers is impressive in landscape. In portrait it's a bit odd, with the system flipping right-hand output to the top and left-hand output to the bottom.



Do the cam

The rear camera is nothing fancy in the modern scheme of things: there's no ultrawide lens, Lidar or True Tone flash. But its 12MP sensor produces solid results. It can shoot 4K video too.



His latest frame

The 12MP ultrawide selfie-cam is a noticeable improvement over the previous model's 7MP equivalent, plus it supports Apple's Centre Stage tech that can follow you around on video calls.

Powerful, smart, sleek and great to use, the new Air catches up where it needed to – namely with Centre Stage and 5G – and blazes ahead with that unexpected M1 chip. Slight storage dilemmas aside, this is a top-notch tablet, supported by an ecosystem that makes it highly versatile for an increasingly wide range of users.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

It's not perfect, but this new Air is a top-quality package – not least because of that M1 chip



The alternative: Samsung Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra

Allergic to Apples? This feisty and imposing tablet means business...

R30 000 / samsung.com/za

■ The S8 Ultra has the biggest display this side of a full-scale laptop: a crisp and punchy 14.6in AMOLED. At just 300 nits the brightness could be better, but we've got no complaints about the 120Hz refresh rate, which makes menus glide fluidly. The tiny bezels and 16:10 aspect ratio make it great for watching films.

■ A Snapdragon 8 Gen 1 chip might not scare the slickest phones out there, but hooked up to PS Remote Play or Steam Link with a Wi-Fi 6 router, our tablet handled games with virtually no latency. Benchmark scores are impressive too.

■ The Tab S8 Ultra's keyboard dock doesn't really work on a lap, making on-the-go productivity its biggest limitation. But hook up an external display, keyboard and Bluetooth mouse, and Samsung's DeX interface makes the whole thing feel like a proper PC. The lines between the two device types have never been blurrier.

■ With a big tablet comes a big 11,200mAh battery. That gives you great standby time – easily a few days of casual use – and screen-on time of around 8hrs to 10hrs, depending on what you're doing with it.

Tech specs

Display 14.6in 2960x1848 AMOLED touchscreen
Processor Snapdragon 8 Gen 1 **RAM** 8/12/16GB
OS Android **Storage** 128/256/512GB **Connectivity** USB-C, Wi-Fi 6, Bluetooth 5.2, GPS, 5G (optional)
Cameras 13+6MP rear, 12+12MP front **Battery life** Up to 10hrs **Dimensions** 326x209x5.5mm, 726g

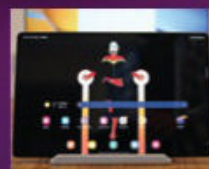
Its sheer size might make it a bit niche, but the Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra is perfect for watching films, playing games, reading text and taking notes with the bundled S Pen. Add DeX, and this is the most fully featured Android tab money can buy.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
 Samsung has made the ultimate Android tablet



Suspicious rinds

At just 5.5mm it's thinner than most phones, but with Gorilla Glass 5 on the front and Armor Aluminium on the back and sides it still feels robust.



■ That's all tight

What's striking is how clean this slate's design is. It has power and volume buttons along the frame, quad speakers, and a slight rear camera bump. The fingerprint scanner is under the screen.



■ That's all write

It ships with an S Pen that has the lowest latency of any Samsung stylus: 2.8ms. Split-screen multitasking works across three apps plus one floating window.



■ That's all bright

The dual front and dual rear cameras hold their own. Samsung loads them up with lots of shooting modes and the front cam has a take on Apple's subject-tracking Centre Stage.

BABY, IT'S COOL OUTSIDE

If you're anything like us, the advent of winter is as welcome as a long, cold shower. But we don't have to be as cooped up as we were the last couple of years, and getting outside is a really great excuse to buy new gear. So what are you waiting for? Here's our guide to the most essential kit to make the most of those ever-shortening days.



CAMPING

Sleep under the stars, romantically lying among the trees with your partner. Oh, who are we kidding — you'll be wading through mud and dodging the rain.

p32



DRONES

Reach for the sky with our run-down of the finest flying cameras for spy missions of all types, from holiday japes to semi-pro filming.

p34



HIKING

"Four seasons in one day," sang Crowded House, who had clearly spent some time in the Lake District. Here's some tough gear for 'fun' hikes.

p36



ACTION CAMS

Get the jump on your friends' sneery "pics or it didn't happen" statements by filming beautiful 4K video of your exploits to wow them with.

p38



CYCLING

Helmets, cycle computers, souped-up pedals and a very clever rear light: check out this selection of streetwise add-ons.

p40



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Check out the latest fitness tech — watches, trackers and apps — from p72.

CAMPING

The best adventure equipment and on-the-go accessories for anyone who thinks walls and ceilings are for softies

We've got to dry
Removable tent walls and a rainfly cover with 5000HH rating protect your camp from wind, rain and prying eyes.

Block rookin' feet
Three anchor points keep the base taut at height, and reinforced webbing creates the rigid sleeping bays.

TENTSILE FLITE CAMPING STACK

NOW ADD THIS...



WILDBOUNDS EXOTAC NANOSPARK LIGHTER

Light your campfire with this ultra-compact tool, designed for a quick light. Tinder can be stored in its completely waterproof anodised aluminium body. **R680 / wantitall.co.za**

It doesn't matter how old you are – treehouses will never not be exciting.

And when you've got a lightweight treehouse that packs down into its own bags, it's pretty much den heaven... although there's quite a price tag for the privilege of living in this Ewok-style utopia.

Designed for wild camping, the Flite is a two-person adventure tent you can erect between trees when you find your perfect spot, using adjustable cords to suspend it from the trunks. The centre of

the tent is reinforced with webbing to create two separate sleeping bays – the idea being that two people won't roll into each other while snoring away. You can even adjust it to deal with weight differences between occupants, and there's enough headroom for you both to sit up when you need to.

But why have two storeys when you can have three? The Ultimate Stack (R22 000) includes all the bits you need to add an extra insect-proof storey

at ground level. Take the top spot in the tent for yourself and let your mates sleep below in the included hammocks, or use one level to stash your gear and another for chilling and watching the sunrise. The different levels are connected via ladders.

At just over 16kg the whole stack is a bit heavy to take on a hike, but it will make the perfect base camp. If you're on the move then you can just take the top tent, which is only 4.7kg.

R16 000 (import) / tentsile.com

HOME COMFORT HELPERS

Packable extras for happy campers



Rab Neutrino 400

Super-lightweight and wind-resistant, this ultra-packable sleeping bag keeps you snug as a bug in a goosedown-filled rug – even when you're bivvying on the side of a mountain. For use in cold conditions (down to -7°C), the stripped-back design does away with excess bulk so you can stash it in your pack for missions on the move.

R5460 (import) / rab.equipment



Hydro Flask Food Jar

Want cold or hot fuel without the faff? This vacuum-insulated food jar will take up less space than a full-on flask, coming in sizes from 235 to 828ml, and the wide mouth is easy to eat bulky food from. The leak-proof stainless steel construction eliminates the fear of getting pasta sauce all over your clean layers when you're scrambling, and the soft-grip lid is easy to open, even in the rain.

R400 / trappers.co.za



Stanley Pour Over

For those who take their coffee seriously, the Perfect-Brew Pour Over is your, well, perfect camping companion to get you out of your sleeping bag in the morning. It features an easy-to-clean filter you can use, remove and reuse again. Just spoon in your favourite medium-ground coffee, saturate with hot water, and let the pour-over do the rest. Makes 1-6 cups.

R500 / capeunionmart.co.za



Fire Maple Fleet Gas Stove

Camping used to mean burnt fingers and burnt supper. You can prevent both with this excellent high output (2990w) stove, weighing in at a mere 146g. The cylinder attaches to a flexible fuel line, so the stove sits lower and more stable, and a pre-heating gas tube increases heat output. The large burner head gives better heat distribution on larger pots.

R825 / capeunionmart.co.za

GOURMET GRAZE



Forever Fresh

Forever Fresh is an SA company that makes quick and easy, ultra-light freeze-dried meals for hungry adventurers. Try butter chicken with basmati rice, beef lasagne, bean chilli ...
from R170 / foreverfresh.co.za



Nature Valley Crunchy Oats & Honey

The most popular snack bar on any South African camping trip. Take enough to share and you'll be popular too.
R60 for six / checkers.co.za



Torq Flapjacks

Squidgy, syrupy vegan goodness to see you through your next adventure: Torq's organic flapjacks come in six delicious cakey flavours. Apple strudel? Ooh, yes please!
R750 for 20 (import) / torqfitness.co.uk

BIG READS



ADVENTURE REVOLUTION BELINDA KIRK

Full of real-life adventure tales, this book explores the life-changing power of choosing a challenge that won't just push your limits but propel you beyond them.



THE BUCKET LIST KATH STATHERS

So now you're inspired to explore but not quite sure which metaphorical (or literal) mountain to climb? This 1000-strong list of wild adventure ideas will fix that.



WILD CAMPING STEPHEN NEALE

If you're tight on budget or just fancy some stripped-back exploration, this is your ultimate guide to taking on stop-and-drop wild adventures in the UK and Ireland.

FLIGHT PLANS



LEARN HOW TO FLY

There are laws governing drone flying in South Africa and everywhere else. Everything you need to know to fly in almost any country in the world is here: drone-laws.com



READ DRONESCAPES: THE NEW AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Get inspired with this photobook, featuring hundreds of eye-popping drone shots and background information on how they were achieved. waterstones.com



WATCH STEWART AND ALINA

One of YouTube's best channels for drone photo and video tips: watch and you'll be getting those epic Hollywood-style shots in no time. youtube.com/c/dronefilmguide

LANDING GEAR



LowePro DroneGuard BP 250

This is a stylish and sturdy way to lug about a DJI Mavic-sized drone, controller and up to five extra batteries – plus your laptop and tablet to boot. **R2 700 / kameraz.com**



SanDisk Extreme 512GB microSDXC Card

Losing your sexiest aerial shots due to a lack of storage? Ooh, that's gotta hurt. So this card provides enough space for well over an hour of 4K footage. **R2 540 / incredible.co.za**



Camkix Camera Cleaning Kit

Keep your drone's camera sparkling and lint-free with this kit – including microfibre cloths, cleaning spray and an air blower to harmlessly knock dust clear of the lens. **R600 / wantitall.co.za**

FIRST TIME FLYERS

The best affordable drones to get you started



DJI Mini SE

With gimbal-stabilised Full HD footage, GPS and 30 minutes of flight time per charge, DJI's cheapest and smallest drone is a little star. Folding to pocketable size, its sub-250g weight means you can fly freely in areas like parks and town centres where heavier drones are restricted. With QuickShot modes and a simple app, you can produce really clever yet quick-to-shoot videos. **R6 000 / takealot.com**



Ryze Tello

Cheap, tiny and controllable with just your phone, the Tello is a good shout for anyone who wants to master the basics of quadcopter flight before investing in pricier, heavier gear. Flight range is limited to a mere 13 minutes and the 720p video quality is choppy, but it's so small you can even fly it indoors. This one's for fun rather than anything more – you can even perform little stunts using the app. **R2 700 / africadroneking.co.za**



Fimi X8 Mini

If you simply must have 4K video recording in your drone, this Xiaomi-backed model is the best cheap option. Weighing under 250g and featuring an excellent 31-minute battery life with good image quality, it's a stable and safe flyer. It's not quite as refined as the DJI Mini SE above, though, and that's still our preferred option around this price point. **R8 000 / shopity.co.za**



Potensic A20

While nothing here is going to set an adventurous would-be pilot's pulse racing, the A20 is a great option for introducing your kids to the world of quadcopter flight. Solid rotor guards and a sturdy build mean it can take a few crash landings, and it can be flown using a single control stick, while there are three speeds to choose from and 21 minutes of flight is promised. **R1 165 / wantitall.co.za**

DRONES

Wow-hoard of the county

There's 8GB of built-in storage – only enough for about 10mins of 4K video, so you'll want to get a microSD card.

With the clouds banished – well, some days – it's the perfect time to let your passion for aerial photography take flight



The gimballer

Wind? No big deal. The camera is mounted on a three-axis gimbal that keeps it steady on the gustiest days.

NOW ADD THIS...



DJI RC PRO

Take your piloting experience to new heights with DJI's powerful controller, which boosts transmission quality and offers a scorchingly bright 1080p screen.

R18 000 (import) / dji.com

DJI MAVIC 3

DJi's flagship folding drone is far from affordable, but once you get it in the air you soon realise it's worth every penny.

Not only does it offer best-in-class battery life, keeping it flying for as long as 46 minutes on a single charge, but its omnidirectional obstacle detection prevents you from ploughing into the neighbours' rhododendrons.

All angles are covered by this cleverness, as long as you fly the Mavic 3 in standard daylight

conditions and don't enable Sports mode (which switches all the anti-collision tech off). It works great in our experience, guiding the drone around stuff if it's on an automated route or stopping dead if it comes across an unexpected obstacle.

It might be a joy to pilot, but the real star of the show is the Mavic 3's camera – or cameras, to be precise. The dual-sensor setup comprises a Hasselblad-branded main unit with a huge 4/3 sensor producing 20MP photos and 5.1K

video at a quality that would have seemed unthinkable a few years ago: sharp, punchy and detailed, even in low light.

The 12MP second unit can't match that, but its special skill of being able to zoom in on far-off subjects is handy for scouting out locations before switching to the Hasselblad. Throw in automatic tracking modes – plus that obstacle avoidance tech and long fly time – and you've got the undisputed king of the skies.

R41000 / takealot.com

APPY TRAVELS



KOMOOT

Part route-planning, part social network, Komoot lets you map your adventures and see the views, cake stops and well-trodden paths of fellow hikers.

Free (IAP) / Android, iOS



MAPS ME

An great feature of this navigation app is the ability to search offline without being connected to the internet. Search by address, categories or coordinates.

Free / Android, iOS



AVENZA

Perhaps the best map app for recreational use. Some South African maps are downloadable for free, purchase others from the in-app map store.

Free / Android, iOS

TIME MACHINES



Garmin Enduro

The Enduro offers an epic 80hrs of GPS battery life. And if you find it's running low miles from home, the solar charging lens means you can get extra power from the sun.

R11500 / sportsmanswarehouse.co.za



Coros Vertix 2

The Vertix 2's ability to talk to all five major satellite systems with dual-frequency communication means optimal signal when you're somewhere deep in the forest.

R18 400 / coroswearables.co.za



Garmin Instinct Solar 2

Waterproof to 100m, with a fibre-reinforced case and scratch-proof glass, this rugged beast of a watch, with solar charging in smartwatch mode, will see you through any challenge.

R8 700 / takealot.com

TOP RUGGED SHOES

Keep your footing on tough terrain



Adidas Terrex AX4 Mid

Lightweight and mid-height, this hiker brings the comfort of a trail-running shoe with added stability. Crossing streams and muddy trails? Not a problem. Whether you're hiking or scrambling, the Gore-Tex membrane keeps you dry and the Continental rubber grip ensures you stay on your feet. Your carbon footprint gets a look in too: 50% of the upper is made from recycled materials.

R2 800 / shop.adidas.co.za



Inov-8 RocFly G 390

This award-winning boot is your go-to for longer hikes and multi-day treks. It's the first hiking boot to feature graphene foam, which gives 25% greater energy return and keeps your boots feeling bouncy and cushioned for longer. Weighing in at just 390g, it's a lightweight boot designed for hard and rocky ground, drier trails and roads – there's not enough grip for snowy or soft conditions underfoot.

R3 500 (import) / inov-8.com



Keen Targhee 3 Mid WP

The Keen Men's Targhee 3 Mid WP Boot is a rugged hiking boot designed to offer the support and traction needed for all-terrain adventures. It somehow does this while giving the comfort of a running shoe, which is quite an achievement. Waterproof leather and mesh upper, which lets vapour escape without letting water in, and breathable mesh lining.

R2 500 / capeunionmart.co.za



On Cloudrock Waterproof

Designed with fast hiking in mind, On's Speedboard technology – a plate of thermoplastic polymer between the midsole and upper – gives you extra propulsion as you tackle the trails. The Missiongrip rubber outsole gives traction and stability without compromising on cushioning, while the lugs bite into soft ground for added grip. This one's suitable for mountain weather.

R4 000 / takealot.com

HIKING

Hood fortune
Cut for comfort in the mountains, the hood is compatible with a helmet and adjustable so you can always be sure of a snug fit.

Sun's out – get off the home-gym hamster wheel and go for a proper run with this kit

66°NORTH HORNSTRANDIR JACKET

Built for tough adventures, the Hornstrandir was designed in Iceland with the needs of skiers, climbers and mountaineers in mind. When you're not scaling peaks, the lightweight construction of this smart shell jacket makes it versatile enough for country hikes, dog walks and urban commutes too.

Whether you're in the Alps or the Drakensberg, you'll be ready for whatever the weather throws at you: the rugged outer has a three-layer Gore-Tex Pro waterproof membrane for optimal protection. Reinforcement at the shoulders and elbows adds an extra layer of robustness for mountain wipeouts, and abrasion-resistant nylon means no snagging when you're scrambling over tough terrain.

This solid construction doesn't mean compromising on movement, though. The Hornstrandir was designed with input from outdoor athletes, resulting in nifty features such as stretch panels on the torso so the jacket moves with you rather than hindering your flow.

R10 000 (import) / 66north.com

NOW ADD THIS...



K-WAY ASSAULT 28

Take everything you need on a day hike. This 28-litre pack has padded hip belts with zipped pockets, a padded back, stretch mesh side pockets and rain cover. It's also hydration compatible.

R1300 / capeunionmart.co.za

This is lug
Taking your phone, keys and snacks with you? Four large pockets with weather-resistant zips mean you can do away with the daypack.

ACTION CAMS

The sharpest shooters and best action-cam accessories to capture your epic/rad/gnarly outdoor escapades



Dew wear it well
Whether you're kayaking, cliff diving or snorkelling, damp days are covered: It's waterproof to 16ft/5m.

Do ya think I'm 6K?
The One RS has a 6K widescreen mode for shooting ultra-hi-res 2.35:1 videos, and an Active HDR mode.

INSTA360 ONE RS

One camera to capture it all — that's the aim of this clever and compact modular action shooter. It shares the same three-part design as its sister One R cam: one battery, one processor and one of three lens modules, each adapting the camera's capabilities to the job in hand.

That trio of interchangeable lenses makes it easy to jump from shooting regular action to full 360° with a quick switch — which is not something you can do with most

GoPros. The price ramps up fast for complete packages, but the full triple-lens kit includes a 4K Boost lens that snaps 48MP stills and 4K 60fps videos, a 5.3K 1in wide-angle co-engineered with Leica, and a 5.7K 360° lens. That's a lot of firepower — and it's all waterproof.

Framerates aren't quite a match for the GoPro Hero10 Black, but you do get built-in image stabilisation (called FlowState), plus Active HDR for more balanced action sports

footage. There's also a horizon lock that helps you snare smooth footage even on super-bumpy adventures, plus an extra mic for improved audio, beefed up processing power, and faster offloading of your footage over Wi-Fi.

The One RS is a highly capable and unique cam-of-all trades that you can do plenty with. It can even make selfie-sticks disappear from your shots, so it looks like you've used a drone.

R11000 / takealot.com

NOW ADD THIS...



JOBY WAVO MIC

This ultra-lightweight pocketable mic connects easily with smartphones and action cams for crisper, wind-free outdoor audio. You can also mount it directly onto a tripod.

R1370 / takealot.com

MORE ACTION CAMS

Best buys for immortalising epic adventures



Insta360 Go2

This tiny-but-mighty movie maker is the world's smallest action cam. Even in its battery-boosting nest, the Go2 doesn't take up much more pocket space than an AirPods case. It's waterproof to 4m, shoots incredible 1440p video, and offers smartphone preview, easy editing on the go and rapid wireless transfers. It charges to full in just 35 minutes and shoots for 2.5hrs in case mode.

R7 000 / takealot.com



GoPro Max

The 3-in-1 Max is an adventure vlogging powerhouse. It shoots 360° in 6K plus regular Hero-style videos, and also snaps stills. Cinematic options are boosted by four digital lenses: Narrow, Linear, Wide and an extra-wide Max SuperView. You can livestream in Full HD and capture incredible timelapses; and with six built-in mics, your audio is tuned to the max. It's also waterproof to 5m.

R10 500 / takealot.com



DJI Action 2

At just 56g, the Action 2's sleek and compact aluminium alloy body makes it light enough to double as a wearable shooter, capturing your gnarly travails in stabilised 4K at 120fps. The unique magnet-locking design lets you clip and switch accessories and mods with ease on the fly, and it has slow-motion and timelapse capabilities plus 12MP stills-shooting. This one is waterproof down to 10m.

R7 800 / droneworld.co.za



GoPro Hero10 Black

Still the undisputed king of action cams, the Hero10 Black packs GoPro's fastest processor, offers HyperSmooth stabilisation and shoots 5.3K at 60fps, plus 4K at 120fps and 23MP photos. It's also waterproof to 10m, supports livestreaming in 1080p direct from the camera and makes transferring and storing your footage easy with automatic cloud uploads.

R11 000 / capeunionmart.co.za

SMOOTH IT



Joby Spin

Pocketable and app-controlled, this rotating tripod head lets you capture dynamic motion timelapses and silky-smooth panning shots with your smartphone. Ideal for pro-quality B-roll.

R1700 (import) / joby.com



Zhiyun Smooth-X2

With three shooting modes – first person, locked and POV – plus SmartFollow object tracking and gesture control, this selfie-stick gimbal brings a smooth, professional edge to smartphone footage.

R1860 / takealot.com



GoPro Floaty

The GoPro Hero10 Black might be waterproof, but one slip and it could easily end up lost at sea... so wrapping it in a Floaty prevents your precious cam sinking without a trace. It's also compatible with the Hero9 Black.

R200 / ormsdirect.co.za

PRO TIPS

AWARD-WINNING ADVENTURE FILMMAKER PAT BOWYER [PATRICKBOWYER.COM] SHARES HIS WISDOM

FOLLOW THE LIGHT

Available light changes your image. Dawn and dusk: softer, richer, for a cinematic shot. Midday light: strong, overhead, contrasty, for a documentary feel. Artificial light (headlights, neon, streetlights, head torches): a whole other world of possibilities.

GET MOVING

Add extra story and context by playing with your shoot position. Get low down to create distance, or shoot from above to isolate. Include foreground – shoot through trees, a half-open car window, a crowd of people – to give your images depth.

CARE FOR YOUR KIT

Rinse water housings, clean off grit and always protect the lens in transit – even if it just means sticking your camera in a sock. Loose house keys and action camera lenses don't mix in a backpack.

GO MANUAL

Don't be afraid to play with your camera's full features to get a better shot. Manually adjust the colour space, shutter speed and ISO; and definitely use ND filters.

CYCLING

Do you need the latest gizmos to ride a bike? No, but they can enhance your ride and encourage you to get out more...

GARMIN VARIA RADAR TAIL LIGHT

Anything that makes the road a safer place to cycle is a worthwhile investment, and Garmin's Varia combined rear light and radar does exactly that. It's the cycling tech you never knew you needed, and once you try it you'll never want to ride without it.

The unit clips onto the seatpost of any bike using Garmin's universal mount. From there, it keeps the rider visible with its light while scanning the road for approaching traffic with its radar.

It'll connect to a Garmin Edge bike computer, selected Garmin wearables or a phone running the Varia app. The device will then alert you to any vehicles coming up behind from up to 140m away; approaching cars are indicated discreetly on the screen of a connected device and accompanied by an optional sound. Garmin claims the rear light can be seen from up to a mile away, while the Varia's battery will last for up to 16hrs of riding.

Of course, it's no substitute for having your wits about you, but used in conjunction with the eyes and ears it's a clever bit of kit that adds a layer of safety and peace of mind to every ride.

R3 300 / mellowvelo.co.za

NOW ADD THIS...



POC OMNE AIR MIPS HELMET

In the rare event that an accident does occur, this low-profile lid features MIPS tech to help reduce the rotational force on your brain from any impact.

R7 325 / wantitall.co.za

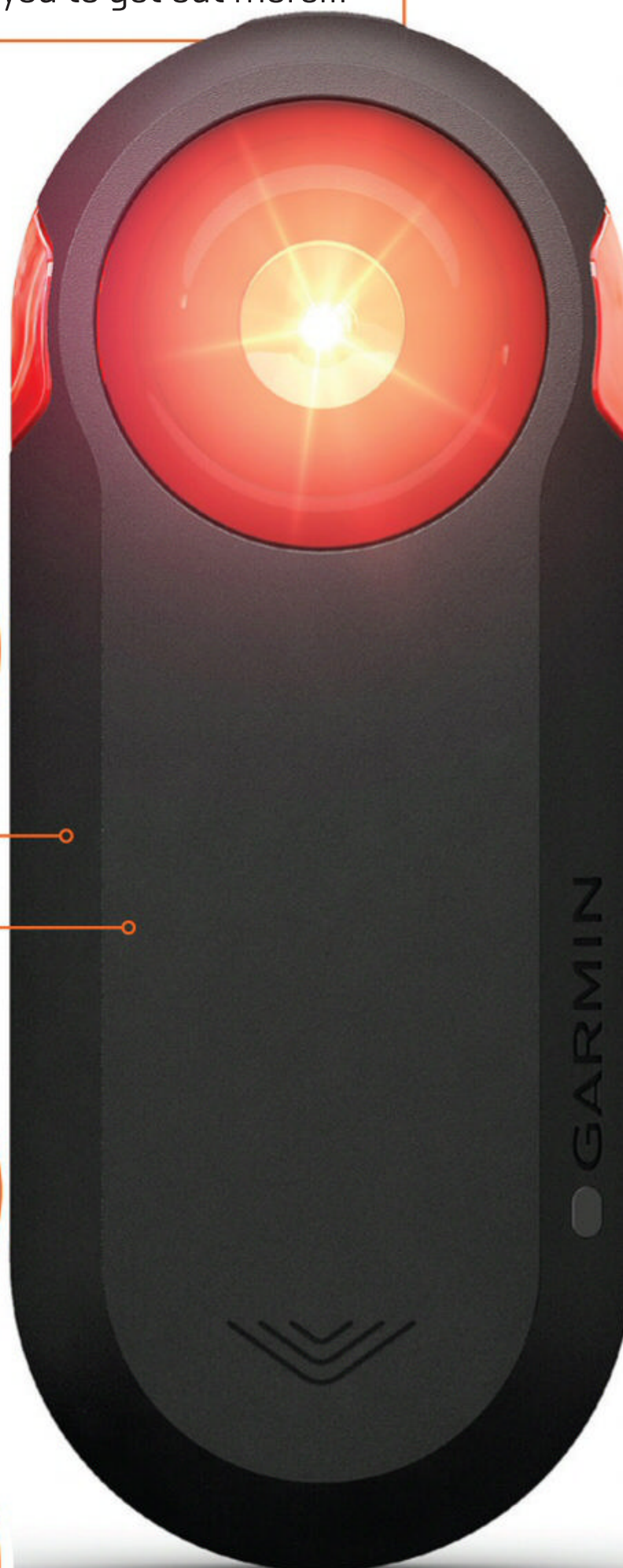
Flashes to flashes

The Varia can be set up to flash solidly or intermittently, which of course has an impact on battery life.



The screen genie

If you don't want to use the radar with a phone or Garmin wearable, you can add an optional display unit.



TOP
TRAINING
TECH

Ride smarter [and harder] with these techy tools



Hammerhead Karoo 2

Wahoo and Garmin have long had a monopoly on bike computers, but Hammerhead's Karoo 2 really does give its rivals a kick up the jacksy. It features a crisp 292ppi touchscreen with phone-like responsiveness, as well as buttons for operating the device with gloves. This gadget is even World Tour-approved, with the Israel Start-Up Nation team riding with the Karoo 2 on their bars.

R7 400 (import) / hammerhead.io



Garmin Rally RS200

If you want to find out precisely how weak your legs are, with detailed feedback on every conceivable metric, these premium power-meter pedals from Garmin are the best (and most expensive) way to do so. Simply clip in and ride, and they'll provide in-depth analysis on things like foot placement, standing/sitting time and, of course, how many Watts you're churning out.

R18 500 / mellowvelo.co.za



Wahoo Kickr Climb

Tackle hills from the comfort of your own home by incorporating this gradient simulator from Wahoo into your indoor training setup – yes, you really can pretend you're climbing Mont Ventoux now. The Kickr Climb connects to the front axle and syncs with apps like Zwift to move the front of the bike up and down in step with the undulations of the virtual landscape.

R13 000 / wahoofitness.co.za



Rapha Bar Bag

It's a bit like a bar bag for your bike... but being Rapha, it's a lot trendier than that. Available in black or 'dark yellow' (surely it's orange?), it has a large main two-litre pocket in addition to mesh compartments for valuables. It can be stowed across your bars with quick-release fastenings, and taken with you as a shoulder bag when you pull up outside that overpriced cycle stop in the Cotswolds to eat your muffin.

R900 (import) / rapha.cc

SAFETY FIRST

Specialized ANGi
Crash Sensor

Accidents happen... and when they do, this GPS crash sensor can call for help even if you're unable to. It's compatible with practically any helmet and syncs with Strava to track rides too.

R1050 / bellscycling.co.za



Lumos Helmet

Available in four different models, this is a simple but very effective product: a cycle helmet with super-bright front and rear lighting, plus turn indicators, juiced via a USB cable.

R2 100 / brights.co.za

Beam Wheel Flash
Reflectors

Stock reflectors might be safe but they're not exactly cool. These discreet reflective wheel stickers do the same job in a much more aesthetically pleasing manner.

R600 / reliablestore.co.za

APPY
RIDING

STRAVA

If it's not on Strava did it even happen? This multifaceted athletic app allows cyclists to plan routes, track fitness, connect with local riders and much more besides.

Free (IAP) / Android, iOS



GARMIN CONNECT

Garmin's proprietary app syncs seamlessly with the brand's head units and other accessories to create a cycling ecosystem that just works. It's a must for any owner of a Garmin smartwatch or bike computer.

Free / Android, iOS



ZWIFT

With a whole virtual world to explore, Zwift encourages you to get on the bike even when weather or time is against you. Connect to a smart trainer and ride with friends or race people across the world.

Free / Android, iOS

How Suun is now?

Suunto thinks its time has come to match Garmin and Coros... but what difference does this multi-sport watch make?

R5 000 / capeunionmart.co.za

■ Looking for a sports watch with a little bit of Finnish flair? Suunto's 5 Peak offers a good tracking experience on the whole, with over 80 sports covered.

■ Suunto's adaptive training guidance, which looks at the intensity and duration of your workouts and creates weekly training plans, is great for newbies. You'll need to use the app for a lot of the navigation features, but the watch's own real-time breadcrumb trails should get you home.

■ The fitness-tracking features are standard fare, including steps and calories burned. We found real-time heart-rate readings to be a little high, which makes it hard to trust the stress readings and breakdown of your body's daily resource levels, but the sleep duration data seemed reliable.

■ You can view smartphone notifications from iOS and also respond to them if you're on Android, but doing so is a chore. The music controls are better: they jump into action as soon as you start playing something on your phone, allowing you to skip tracks and tinker with the volume.

■ Suunto reckons the 5 Peak should be good for a week before you need to reach for the charger, but it all depends on how you use it. Continuous heart-rate monitoring will drain the battery more quickly, but using less accurate GPS modes should eke out a little more life.

Tech specs

Screen 1.1in 218x218 MiP

Sensors GPS, heart-rate, altimeter

Water-resistance 30m

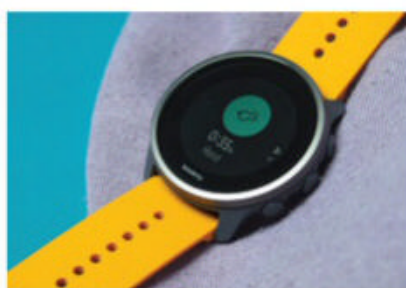
Battery life Up to 7 days

Dimensions 43x43x12.9mm, 39g



Sealer take a bow

At 12.9mm the case is not the slimmest, but it's only 39g. The strap is comfy but ours did come undone a few times.



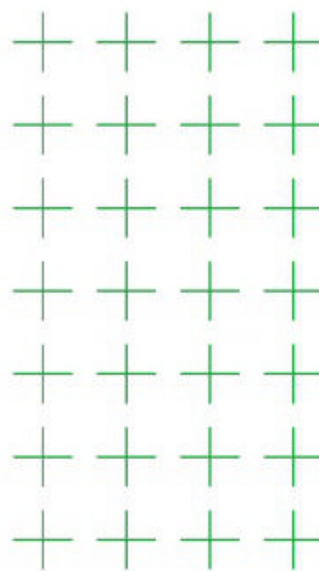
Hand in shove

A stainless steel bezel sits on top of a 43mm plastic case that's waterproof down to 30 metres. The five physical buttons feel a little on the stiff side and the watch is also slow to respond when you press them.



This charming scan

The 1.1in always-on matrix display does OK in direct sunlight and there's an LED backlight for when it's dark, but it's no match for a proper AMOLED or LCD. It's also fighting a losing battle with the sizeable black border.



STUFF SAYS Lightweight and pretty, but you can get better for the same money ★★☆☆☆

Heaven knows I'm wearable now... but rivals offer more

This Peak model is a much better-looking watch than the old Suunto 5 and offers good features for outdoor types or those looking for something to help them decide on how to train. The problem is that the sluggish on-watch software and display – and busy companion app – make handling it on a daily basis feel a bit of a drag. You're better off with a Garmin Forerunner 245, Polar Vantage M2 or Coros Pace 2.

Uptown top cranking

With its little monochrome display and crank controller, the Playdate is a handheld console like no other... or is it just a box of hype?

R2900 (import) / play.date

Crank you for the music
You'll be surprised by how loud the built-in speaker can go. In fact, we were never really tempted to plug in headphones.



■ The pocketable Playdate feels more like a high-end toy than a fully fledged portable console. Its diminutive proportions mean you tend to hold it from the bottom but it screams at you to pick it up. You'll have to wait until 2023, though – it's sold out until then.

■ It might look like an old-school handheld but there's no cartridge slot: 24 games are automatically delivered to your Playdate over the course of 12 weeks. Not every title in the eclectic lineup held our attention, but even some of the less engaging ones use the crank in interesting ways.

■ You're not limited to the initial catalogue either. Developers will be able to make and distribute exclusive new titles that can be sideloaded onto the system via USB, plus there's a browser-based tool called Pulp that you can use to make your own Playdate games.

■ The 2.7in monochrome screen has true retro appeal and all the games look super-sharp. The lack of a backlight makes it hard to see what's going on in dark conditions but it copes well in sunlight.

■ We were quite impressed by the zippiness of the processor when hopping between games. Battery life is rated at 8hrs of active use, or two whole weeks using the standby clock mode, and our experience was pretty consistent with that.

Tech specs

Display 2.7in 400x240 1-bit
Processor Cortex-M7 **RAM** 16MB
Storage 4GB Flash **Connectivity** Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, USB-C
Audio 1x mono speaker, 3.5mm stereo out **Battery life** 8hrs
Dimensions 76x74x9mm, 86g



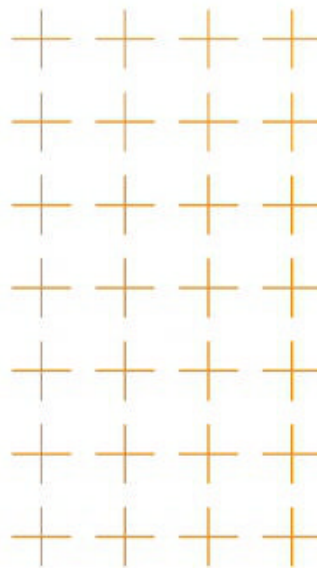
■ Crank holiday

The crank can be used to navigate the system as well as to play games, but that's not it for controls: you also get a far more traditional D-pad and two buttons, A and B, all of which feel pleasingly clicky.



■ Crank me, Mr Shankly

It might be teeny but the crank doesn't feel delicate. It can be hidden within a groove on the side of the device, into which it snaps magnetically. To use it, you just pull at the bottom and flip it 180° on its hinge.



STUFF SAYS A unique handheld that feels both old-fashioned and totally new ★★★★★

A niche gadget for indie nerds: cranks for the memories

The Playdate is best thought of as a new-age Nintendo Game & Watch: something you'll pick up for five minutes here and there when you're feeling fidgety. It's weird and sometimes awkward – the less-than-ideal ergonomics meant we were drawn more to the arcadey Playdate experiences than stuff we had to hunch over and immerse ourselves in – but if it's on your desk or in your pocket, you'll find it hard to resist.

Know wear to run

It's about time you slashed your PB – so we've tested six of running's best hi-tech super-shoes to help you unleash your speedy potential

Saucony Endorphin Speed 2

What's the story?

Saucony's nylon-plated eye-catchers are designed as a training partner to the racier Endorphin Pro 2. At 224g they're light and agile, thanks to a combination of high-energy Pwrrun PB foam and a foot-long nylon plate that's better for regular running than carbon. Plus there's Speedroll midsole tech – a sort of curved rocker shaping – to smooth your heel-to-toe transition in every step.

Up top, breathable and flexible mono-mesh uppers wrap your feet, while the outsole has reinforced high-abrasion zones to deliver reliable traction even when you're taking tight corners at top speed.

Are they any good?

There are loads of really good shoes around right now... but the Endorphin Speed 2 is the leader of the pack. If you want a single pair of road shoes that can do it all, get these.

They blend speed with comfort to conquer training miles at most paces with

ease, and happily shift up the gears into race mode too – up to the marathon and even beyond.

Comfortable the second you lace them up, these shoes feel like they belong on your feet. The mesh uppers are snug but flex so you never feel cramped. There's plenty of wiggle room in the toe box and the heel packs just enough padding for reliable comfort over the longer miles.

Underfoot, the big stack of lightweight foam does two jobs: helping with a punchy response that excels during faster training miles, and getting your back when fatigue kicks in. They are pricier than some daily trainers, and the outsole isn't the grippiest in the wet, but we've clocked hundreds of miles in our test pair and love how durable they've proven.

R5900 / wantitall.co.za

Key specs

- 224g ● 35.5mm heel stack, 27.5mm toe stack
- Nylon plate

STUFF SAYS A brilliant daily trainer and a solid racer: the perfect all-rounder ★★★★★

Nike ZoomX Streakfly

What's the story?

The super-lightweight Streakfly is built for all-out speed over the mile, 5km and 10km – filling a gap in Nike's line-up behind its Vaporfly and Alphafly carbon racers.

But unlike those more marathon-friendly shoes, these don't have a carbon plate – instead you get minimal mesh uppers with a lower, full-length stack of ZoomX midsole foam and a weight-saving Pebax 'shank', there to provide snappy transitions and midfoot support.

Are they any good?

As stripped-back and racy as the Adidas Takumi Sen 8 over the page, these Nikes vanish on the feet the moment you lace them up. The mesh uppers strike a brilliant balance of being structured enough to wrap and support the foot but flexible enough to let you run unrestricted.

Despite packing a fairly high stack of foam, they're also impossibly lightweight. That all adds up to a road

feel that's nimble, agile and a whole lot of fun. Every time we put these on we wanted to run fast – and the shoes delivered.

But there is something a little unusual about these shoes. The ZoomX foam is incredibly compressive and, without a plate, it almost collapses with each stride. You can feel the road coming up through each soft step, creating a more grounded sensation than other race shoes. That definitely makes these better suited to all-out pace over shorter distances than anything beyond an efficient half marathon.

They're also considerably cheaper than many race shoes... but we worry about the durability of that midsole foam. We'd recommend saving these for chasing parkrun PBs or interval workouts on the track.

R3000 / nike.com/za

Key specs

- 182g ● 32mm heel stack, 26mm toe stack
- Pebax shank

STUFF SAYS A short-distance racer that makes you want to run fast ★★★★★☆

**BEST FOR
ATTACKING
INTERVALS**

Sole power

Nike analysed runner data to dictate the outsole traction pattern, for grip that holds well on tight turns.

Make it shanky

A midfoot shank delivers a balance of stiffness and support, for good stability and an enjoyably propulsive feel.



NIKE ZOOMX

Super pad

The Saucony shoes' rocker-shaped midsole works with the nylon plate to put more propulsion into each step.

Flex machine

That nylon plate is more flexible than stiffer carbon alternatives, making it a more forgiving ride for daily training.

**BEST FOR
DOING
IT ALL**

**We will rock shoe**

The Rocket X's foam midsole is curved in Hoka's trademark rocker shape for efficient heel-to-toe transitions.

**BEST FOR
NATURAL
SPEED**

Stiller queen

Thanks to a low stack height and bucket-seat foothold, you feel close to the ground for a more natural carbon ride.

Hoka Rocket X

What's the story?

Hoka pitches the Rocket X as a balls-out racer built to go hard and fast over shorter distances. But in reality this is a lightweight shoe you can use for both racing and training. It combines a high stack of Hoka's lightest EVA midsole foam with the brand's trademark rocker (the same 1mm carbon plate you find in its longer-distance racer, the Carbon X), plus a structured but breathable mesh upper.

But what sets it apart from other carbon shoes is a low-profile midsole cushion bed – so even though you're running on relatively large wedges of foam, your feet still feel close to the ground.

Are they any good?

We were surprised by the Rocket X's ability to handle a wide range of distances

and paces. They're light, nimble and nippy enough to power you – and your burning lungs – rapidly round your local parkrun. But they also have the right credentials for stepping up to longer distances.

What's even more surprising is how fast and smooth they feel when you're moving well. Like most EVA midsoles, they don't quite deliver the big bounce of many super-shoes, but that less aggressive squish-and-response sensation makes for a much more natural ride. The real magic, though, comes from that curved rocker that rolls you effortlessly through your stride, helping you to turnover with impressive speed.

At 210g, the Rocket X is heavier than rivals from Nike and Adidas, but they somehow don't feel weighty on the feet. The mesh uppers hold and hug nicely

without being constrictive, and unlike some carbon shoes, the Rocket X delivers the stability and comfort needed for regular training, not just racing. A rubberised outsole with strategically reinforced sections also ensures durability, even when you venture off the tarmac onto gravel park paths.

This is one of those shoes that has the skills to carry you from your first training session right to the finish line on race day. That versatility, combined with a friendly price tag, make it a carbon shoe worth checking out.

R3 500 / theathletesfoot.co.za

Key specs

● 210g ● 30mm heel stack, 25mm toe stack ● Carbon plate

STUFF SAYS A more natural carbon shoe, ideal for runners on a budget ★★★★★



Roddy language
Five 'Energyrods', one under each metatarsal, flex with your feet for a more natural propulsive feel than a carbon plate.

**BEST FOR
RACING
5-10KM**

Grey the game
Bit gaudy, innit? But if you want your running times to do the talking, there's also a black, grey and white option.

Adidas Takumi Sen 8

What's the story?

The lightweight Takumi Sen 8 are among a new breed of trainers sitting somewhere between racing flats and high-stacked carbon super-shoes. They're built for 5km and 10km races but pack enough underfoot protection to stretch up to half marathons and maybe beyond.

These race-ready shoes offer a techy triple: a high stack of extra-responsive Lightstrike Pro foam, Energyrods under each toe for smooth transitions (and extra propulsion) plus stripped-back, minimal Celermesh uppers, made with at least 50% recycled content.

Are they any good?

The Takumis are excellent all-out racers that serve up an exciting and agile ride. Lighter and a touch more stable than

some of the most popular carbon-plate shoes, they're lively and propulsive whether you're punching out top-speed intervals on the track or pushing higher paces over a fast 5k.

For faster runners they might just have enough cushioning for half marathons, although for most aiming to tame those longer distances the Adizero Adios Pro 2 is a better option. That's partly because the Takumis' paper-thin, barely-there uppers have a foot-hugging racing fit with less structured support and very little of the heel padding that usually boosts comfort over longer mileages.

The lower heel-to-toe drop and smaller stack of midsole foam also offer less protection when your form gets ragged or you simply want to run slower – plus they come up very narrow. For some that

will create a pleasingly secure locked-in race fit, but it won't be the comfiest if you've got wider feet.

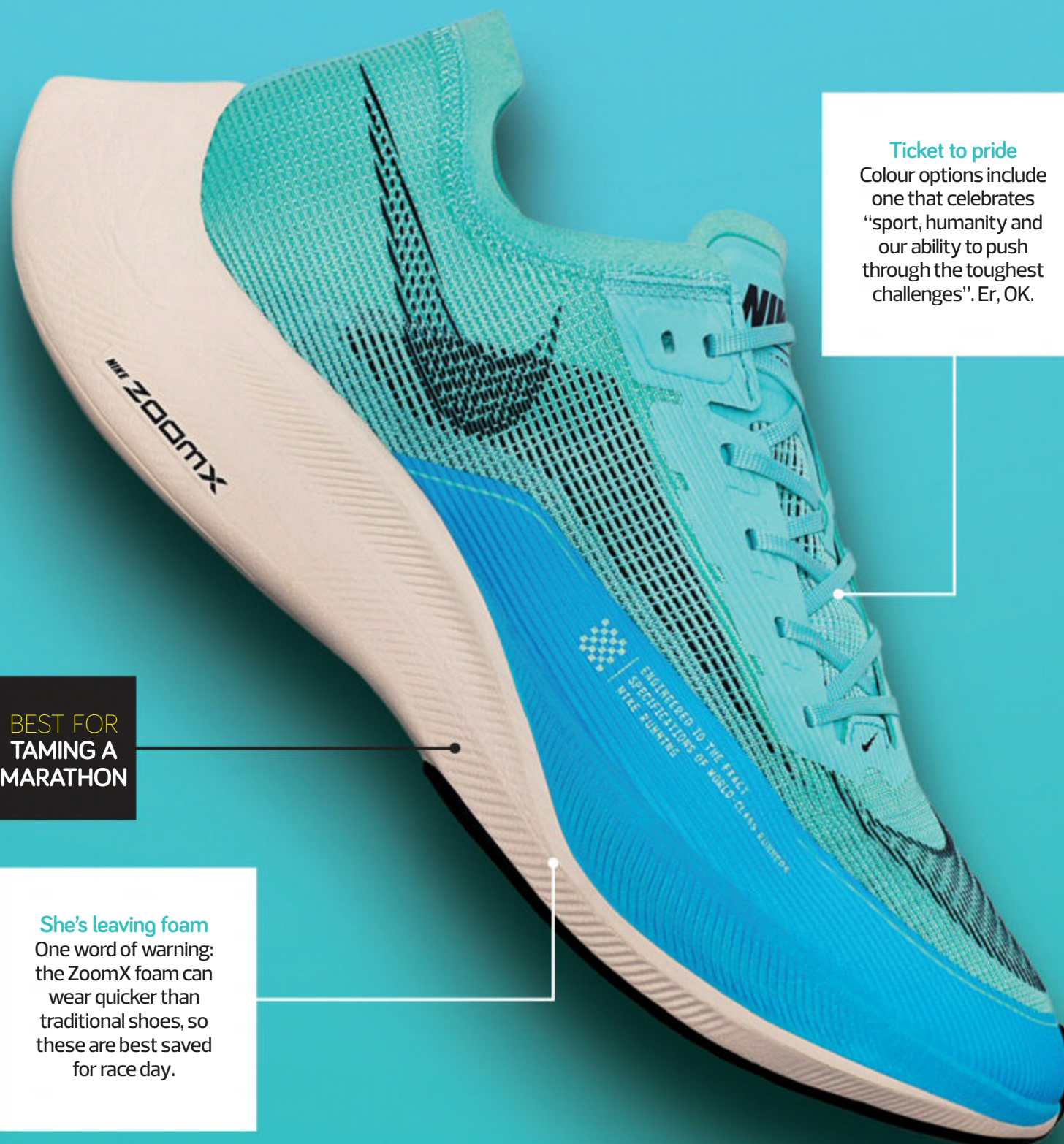
While some minimal race shoes can feel a bit flimsy, these are impressively solid: in our tests the midsole foam soaked up 80 kays with little sign of wear. A good covering of outsole rubber provides protection in all the key areas, while a section of strategically placed Continental rubber adds a stronger barrier where you need it most and enhances grip on tighter, faster turns. That makes these a great option from track to tarmac.

R3500 / adidas.co.za

Key specs

● 185g ● 33mm heel stack, 27mm toe stack ● TPU Energyrods

STUFF SAYS Fast and versatile, this shorter-distance shoe offers top value for money ★★★★★☆



Ticket to pride

Colour options include one that celebrates "sport, humanity and our ability to push through the toughest challenges". Er, OK.

BEST FOR TAMING A MARATHON

She's leaving foam

One word of warning: the ZoomX foam can wear quicker than traditional shoes, so these are best saved for race day.

Nike Vaporfly Next% 2

What's the story?

The original Vaporfly was the shoe that changed running. And thankfully, the second-gen Vaporfly 2 follows closely in its footsteps. The classic super-shoe combination remains unchanged: a wedge of Nike's punchy ZoomX midsole foam, that all-important foot-long carbon fibre plate for explosive push-offs and efficiency, plus lightweight uppers for reliable comfort.

Those uppers have changed from baggy VaporWeave to a more substantial fabric mesh, but the toe box is still roomy – and at 186g, the Vaporfly remains lighter than the Alphafly, making it more versatile.

Are they any good?

When it launched, Nike's higher-stacked Alphafly Next% kicked things up a gear in

the efficiency stakes, helping elites like Eliud Kipchoge smash records – including that epic sub-2hr marathon. But scan the start line of any major city road race and you'll quickly see that the Vaporfly Next% are still a hugely popular choice for racing half and full marathons, and even 5km and 10km contests.

Studies have shown that the Alphafly offer better efficiency gains... but many runners rate the Vaporfly's fit, comfort, ride – and price – above Nike's less natural feeling Alphafly. And try as they might, other brands are still trying to match this model's combination of cushioned protection, relative stability and explosive push-offs.

They tip you up onto your forefoot and make you want to speed away the moment you lace them up. If you're

looking for optimum comfort over a little extra speed, these are still one of the best carbon racers – definitely over the marathon distance, and arguably for shorter efforts too.

We're big fans of the offset side lacing system that helps deliver good foot hold, while added padding to the tongue prevents unwanted lace pressure. The high stack of ZoomX foam also offers excellent protection when you're running with good form over long distances, and there's more stability here than you'll get in narrower shoes.

R4 900 / sportsmanswarehouse.co.za

Key specs

● 186g ● 40mm heel stack, 32mm toe stack ● Carbon plate

STUFF SAYS An accomplished racer built for bossing half and full city marathons ★★★★★

**Day gripper**

The PumaGrip rubber outsoles provide some of the best tarmac traction we've experienced on a road shoe.

**BEST FOR
BARGAIN
BOUNCE**

Twist and stout

A 'clip' insert works in tandem with a section of firmer foam at the heel of the Velocity Nitro to add stability to your stride.

Puma Velocity Nitro

What's the story?

A brilliantly versatile daily trainer, the Velocity Nitro is built to handle everything from casual 5km cardio workouts up to longer Sunday runs. These Pumas offer excellent step-in comfort thanks to a luxe combination of plush heel cushioning, a well-padded tongue and a foot-wrapping engineered mesh upper that balances support and flexibility.

Impact protection and good stability are assured by an 8mm-drop stack of nitrogen-infused EVA midsole foam underfoot. That's capped off by a rubber outsole that provides fantastic grip and beefs up the durability.

Are they any good?

These perform a little more like traditional running shoes than some of the others on

test, and it's much more of a trainer than the other all-out speed-chasers. But the ride is still supreme. The soft EVA midsole foam is in its element on longer runs and slower recovery miles, but still has a surprising kick when you pick up the pace. Racing, training or just plodding for fun, it's a surprisingly adaptable option, ideal for those runs when you're quite not sure what shape you're in – a good choice for racing a marathon when your training hasn't quite gone to plan and the wheels might well come off 30 kays in.

If the Takumi, Vaporfly and Streakfly are stripped-back racing cars, this is more of a luxury cruiser – with loads of padding to cradle your feet in reliable comfort over the long haul, a flexible and supportive foot-wrapping upper, and plenty of underfoot impact protection from a

nicely stacked midsole. Yes, it's heavier as a result, but that all adds up to a shoe you really look forward to lacing up... and there's just enough response and roll to keep it feeling relatively lively.

By the time you're reading this the second-generation Velocity Nitro 2 will be on the shelves, but don't write off the original: it's a well-built, no-nonsense workhorse of a trainer with a winning combination of great cushioning, reliable comfort and durability. And if you can find a pair at a cut price, you'll be bagging an even bigger bargain.

R2750 / theathletesfoot.co.za

Key specs

● 258g ● 32mm heel stack, 24mm toe stack ● No plate

STUFF SAYS A wonderfully comfy, multi-talented cruiser with a real turn of speed ★★★★★☆

Flip glidin' away

Microsoft's Surface series is boosted by another masterfully flexible entry – but can the Laptop Studio meet the needs of demanding pro users?

from R42 000 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

Microsoft loves a hinge – and all the years of experimentation and R&D have resulted in this: the Surface Laptop Studio. When laid out like a normal laptop it looks and feels just like, well, a normal laptop. But its 14.4in screen can be tilted forwards to become a digital drawing board.

As with the Surface Studio 2 (a big, expensive all-in-one PC aimed at designers), price is a potential issue here. OK, you're not going to get this kind of world-class design for peanuts, but if you go for one of the most punchy configurations you'll end up paying over R50k for a computer with a GPU that's found in laptops available for under R16 000.

However, if you forget about the power users who want to render 8K video in a flash and instead look down to the entry-level model – still powerful enough for most of us – you can appreciate how much there is to admire about this well-designed Windows machine.

I am a block

The Surface Laptop Studio has the series' signature magnesium construction (1). It feels less cool and metallic than aluminium, but there's no way you'd mistake it for plastic like some magnesium alloy laptops. It's portable, but not ultraportable: it weighs about 500g more than is ideal.

You can call me gnarl

It's pretty powerful for a laptop of this style and size. Our sample has an Intel Core i7-11370H CPU, 16GB of RAM, a 512GB SSD and an Nvidia RTX 3050 Ti GPU (3). This is probably the lowest-end version to buy if you're planning on doing serious graphics work.

Still crazy after all these hours

Microsoft says the battery can last up to 19hrs... but half that is probably more accurate, and you can get it to conk out in under 80 minutes if you push it to its limits (4). It uses Microsoft's magnetic charger and has two Thunderbolt 4 sockets, so you might need to invest in a USB-C dock.

Weight in the evening

There's a large, ultra-smooth glass trackpad that uses haptic rather than proper mechanical feedback (2), plus a tactile QWERTY with very high-quality key actuation and a three-level backlight. Key travel could be better, but at 1.3mm it's in line with Microsoft's top-tier range.

The joy in the double

If you don't need a discrete GPU, this becomes a straight-up alternative to a MacBook Pro with a far more versatile design. But the base model has Intel's basic Xe graphics and only 256GB of storage, which might not hit the spot for video editors or 3D modellers.



GOOD
MEH
EVIL

Screen
bezels are a
bit chunky

Cooling
system is
very quiet

Six-speaker
audio system
sounds great

The stylus
costs R1 700
extra

3:2 screen
ratio is ideal
for work

A Mac's
battery lasts
much longer

Face land

The Full HD webcam is much better than the 720p job you get in the average PC, so the image won't look like sludge in dim lighting.

**Tech specs**

Display 14.4in 2400x1600 120Hz touchscreen **Processor** Intel Core i5/i7 **RAM** 16/32GB **OS** Windows 11 **Storage** 256/512GB/1/2TB SSD **Connectivity** Wi-Fi 6, Bluetooth 5.1, 2x USB-C, 3.5mm audio, Surface Connect **Cameras** Windows Hello plus 1080p front **Battery life** Up to 19hrs **Dimensions** 323x228x18.9mm, 1742/1820g

Nifty ways to heave your lover

Because there's much more to the Surface Laptop Studio than just boring old typing...

**■ Height stuff**

Gently push back on the top half of the display and the whole screen pivots around a joint that runs along its middle. You're limited to three positions: standard laptop, screen flipped 180°, or the display in front of the keyboard.

**■ Tight stuff**

Covering the keyboard should put the screen into the optimum position to use the stylus, but it's not actually that comfortable. We tried arranging it at a more desirable slope but it's not totally stable at other angles.

**■ Bright stuff**

The 3:2 touchscreen is very bright for an IPS LCD and colour depth is very good. But it can't compete with the MacBook Pro's display, which is more than twice as bright and covers the entire DCI-P3 colour standard.

**■ Write stuff**

The Surface Slim Pen 2 isn't included, which may sting a bit. With 4096 pressure levels its haptic feedback does a good job of making the PC feel more realistic to use, plus it sticks to the keyboard surround magnetically.

The Surface Laptop Studio has the elegance we've come to expect from Microsoft, with Apple-esque industrial design, a great screen and audio setup, and a brilliantly quiet cooling system. There is a question over how much design pros are going to fall in love with it, though, and it's a bit pricey for the rest of us.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
The king of the hinge raises its game again, bringing an excellent screen and a haptic touchpad with it



Can't be sore

The headband can be adjusted using Rode's bespoke FitLock mechanism; it feels very close to having a custom fit.

Skin and 'phones

All the pads can be swapped out quickly and easily – ideal if you want to sterilise them for the next user in a studio environment.

A certain plum one

The optional coloured cables are designed to match the channel colours on the RodeCaster Pro mixing desk and Rode Connect software.

EARS: WHERE THE STORY ENDS

Yes, your lifelong quest to find the perfect headphones is almost over... because from sweatproof fitness buds to noise-cancelling over-ears, somewhere over the next 14 pages you'll find the right 'phones for you

RODE NTH-100

Rode is known for its pro mics and other audio gear, but this is the Australian company's first ever pair of headphones – and despite that heritage, they're not just for the studio. The NTH-100s offer great sonic performance, as you might expect, but what's more of a surprise is how comfortable they are.

Weighing in at a hefty 350g, these closed-back cans have contoured earcups stuffed with high-density memory foam, providing excellent passive noise-isolation. The earpads and headband are covered with Alcantara, a fabric often used in luxury cars that's superbly soft to the touch and very breathable. Then there's a layer of Rode's CoolTech gel, to absorb

and dissipate heat efficiently. The result is that they're comfortable to wear for long periods.

They're sturdy enough to prevent external sound from creeping in and they keep internal sound from seeping out, which makes them ideal for podcasting, livestreaming, recording and editing.

Each pair of headphones is supplied with a 2.4m straight cable, which is long enough for working at a large mixing desk or recording on location with a boom. Optional 1.2m cables are available in pink, green, orange and blue, making it easy to check who's speaking on a busy podcast.

By using closely matched 40mm dynamic drivers, Rode has created

a pair of headphones with a wonderfully flat response. Those drivers are built around a voice coil with four layers of ultra-high-tension aluminium alloy at their core. This is teamed up with an ultra-stiff triple-layer Mylar diaphragm and a rare-earth neodymium magnet, all adding up to optimal acoustic performance with low levels of distortion.

The NTH-100s have very little colouring and a wide frequency response ranging from 5Hz to 35kHz. They deliver the kind of top-notch clarity you'd expect to hear from a proper pair of open-back 'phones.

Price R4 100 / bothners.co.za

STUFF SAYS Sleek looks, comfort and exceptional sound – a superb debut ★★★★★

TRUE WIRELESS

It seems nobody's worried about dropping one in the street and seeing it get eaten by a dog any more, so here are the finest buds with no strings attached

SONY WF-1000XM4

The fact that you can't move for true wireless in-ear headphones these days is, in large part, Sony's fault. And with the WF-1000XM4s, the latest model in the company's madly successful WF-1000 series of true wireless earbuds, the company has served up a contender that's smaller, lighter, greener and more affordable than ever. Oh, and they manage to sound even more eloquent and direct than the (already very decent) XM3s that they replaced.

The more compact design means the WF-1000XM4s are more portable when they're not in use and more comfortable when they are. And the control app – which is still about as

good as it gets where stability and usability are concerned – has some useful 'lifestyle' features as well as the more common playback controls, adjustable EQ settings, active noise-cancellation (ANC) levels and so on. Add in nicely responsive touch controls and compatibility with voice assistants, and getting what you want from the XM4s couldn't be any more straightforward.

What really seals the deal for these Sonys, though, is what a brilliant pair of all-rounders they are. It's probably fair to say there's no single area where these buds are streets ahead of their nominal opposition – in fact, when it comes to the biggest features taken individually, it's possible to

find alternatives that perform slightly better. But the key thing is, the XM4s are never far behind the finest options around in terms of sound quality, ANC, battery life or comfort – and if you want to get the absolute best in each of those categories you're going to end up buying four pairs of earbuds. Or you could just buy a pair of these and be absolutely certain that no rival is quite as accomplished in across-the-board terms.

All of which means it's unlikely the WF-1000XM4s will be surpassed as our true wireless buds of choice until Sony decides it's time to roll out the XM5s.

Price R6 000 / incredible.co.za

STUFF SAYS The best all-round true wireless in-ear headphones available ★★★★★

NOW
ADD
THESE



NATIVE UNION DROP

Never forget how important a grippy surface is when picking a wireless charging pad... and 10W of fuelling power shouldn't be sniffed at either. These are good reasons to choose the Native Union Drop, but so is the choice of four finishes.

R2 100 / wantitall.com



MOUS ARAMID FIBRE AIRPODS PRO CASE

Got Apple true wireless buds? You could do worse than getting a Mous case to protect your investment. You can charge your buds while they're in the case and even check the charging LED.

R2 250 / wantitall.com

ALTERNATIVELY...



GRADO GT220

R5 500 / takealot.com

Most true wireless in-ear headphones will do more for you than the Grado GT220s. Most have active noise-cancellation, quite a lot have a control app that lets you fiddle with EQ settings, and some have had more attention paid to their looks. But none have the sonic conviction, fidelity or impeccable musicality to equal these Grados.

Stuff says ★★★★★



TECHNICS EAH-AZ60

R8 000 / wantitall.co.za

Let's just tick the positives off, shall we? The EAH-AZ60s are well made and snug. They have a long list of features, including one of the best control apps around. Their battery life is decent. They wear an evocative logo. And they make a confident, informative sound. All that's required is for that price to come down just a touch and they'll be just the ticket.

Stuff says ★★★★★



SHURE AONIC FREE

R3 000 / sbrprosoud.co.za

The deal with the Shure Aonic Free buds is a bit like the deal with the Grado GT220s. Shure doesn't make you go without a companion app, but there's no ANC here and battery life is on the miserly side. The buds are unfashionably large too. But, like the Grados, they have the fidelity, control and positivity that makes every listen an event.

Stuff says ★★★★★



SONY WF-C500

R1 300 / incredible.co.za

Yes, Sony has built these in-ears to a startlingly affordable price, which has inevitably meant a compromise or two. But the good news is that the WF-C500s are comfortable in the ears and sound very lively.

You have plenty of choice where sub-£100 true wireless buds are concerned – but these should definitely be on your list, 'coral orange' or otherwise.

Stuff says ★★★★★

**A trick of the scale**

Reducing the size of the earbuds by over 10% compared to the XM3s makes the XM4s lighter, more comfortable and more portable.

I know what I mic

Three mics in each bud take care of phone calls, voice control and ANC... and they turn out to be very good at all of those things.

Din too deep

The XM4s are rated to IPX4 against water splashes – so while you shouldn't wear them to swim, a bit of moisture won't do any harm.

Ballad of easy driver

The XM4s use the same 40mm free-edge dynamic drivers as the XM3s to do their sonic business – ‘if it ain’t broke’ and all that...

Mr space-cans

Yes, you can enjoy the delights of spatial audio thanks to compatibility with Sony 360 Reality Audio... once you’ve set it up in the app.

Chestnut pair

On the left earcup there’s a power button, a 3.5mm input for wired listening, and an NFC patch for the easiest wireless pairing imaginable.



OVER-EARS

Clamp a pair of these beauties to your head and, as well as looking a bit like a Cyberman, you'll be able to wallow in a pool of high-quality immersive audio

SONY WH-1000XM4

For once, 'less' really is 'more'. Compared to the extremely capable WH-1000XM3s they replaced, these WH-1000XM4s are slightly slimmer and slightly lighter, and travel in a slightly smaller case. And as an overall proposition, they're slightly better – which means that, by extension, these are the finest pound-for-pound wireless over-ear headphones you can buy.

The specifications haven't got any smaller, naturally. The WH-1000XM4s can be controlled via voice commands, capacitive touch controls, or an app for which the word 'comprehensive' is a complete understatement. They have adaptive noise-cancelling that monitors your environment 700 times

a second in order to make sure it's doing an optimal job; they're compatible with Sony's 360 Reality Audio spatial sound algorithm; and they even have music-pausing accelerometers that detect when you've taken them off your head to pause the music – which was about the only worthwhile feature the XM3s went without.

Most important of all, though, the WH-1000XM4s sound the absolute business. With some fat hi-res digital audio files playing (they're compatible with Sony's LDAC codec), the Sonys combine forensic detail retrieval, heavyweight punch, outstanding rhythmic expression, and brilliantly intimate and revealing reproduction

of vocals into an overall presentation that can't be bettered at anything like this money.

And perhaps even better, they aren't at all sniffy about the quality of the audio files you want to listen to. Oh, they sound their best with hi-res content of course, but unlike a few alternatives they don't fall to pieces when you ask them to deal with the Spotify free tier: they continue to deliver in a convincing, and convincingly effortless, manner.

The WH-1000XM3s were a hard act to follow. But Sony's next flagship over-ears, when they finally arrive, really have their work cut out.

Price R6 000 / incredible.co.za

STUFF SAYS Better than the old model – and they were fantastic already ★★★★★



ALTERNATIVELY...



BOWERS & WILKINS PX7

R6 900 / takealot.com

How to solve the problem of launching cracking wireless headphones that seem just a little on the pricey side? Well, if you're as pragmatic as B&W you simply take a chunk out of the asking price until they're direct rivals for Sony. And while the PX7s don't have the feature set of the WH-1000XM4s, they have ace sound quality.

Stuff says ★★★★★



APPLE AIRPODS MAX

R9 000 / everyshop.co.za

It's easy to poke fun at the AirPods Max – so why not? After all, their daft carry-case and preposterous price invite it. But get beyond the self-conscious Appleness of these headphones and there's a beautifully built and finished, deftly accomplished and great-sounding pair of wireless noise-cancellers trying to get out.

Stuff says ★★★★★☆



MARK LEVINSON NO. 5909

R20 000 (import) / marklevinson.com

It's a rash company that attempts to make the AirPods Max look like a bargain... or at least a highly confident one. Yes, these cans are expensive, given they don't do anything the Sonys do for a quarter of the price – but in terms of out-and-out sound quality, these are the best headphones on this spread by quite a margin.

Stuff says ★★★★★



BOSE NCH 700

R9 000 / hificorp.co.za

The NCH stands for noise-cancelling headphones, but don't let an overly literal model name put you off: Bose knows exactly what it's doing where hubbub-killing cans are concerned. So what you have here is a pair of wireless on-ears that cancel noise as effectively as you might imagine and, as a bonus, look a lot less frumpy than you might have been fearing.

Stuff says ★★★★★☆

NOW
ADD
THESE



SONY XPERIA 1 III

There's lots to like about Sony's flagship phone. Its screen is outstanding, and so is its battery life. But note also its compatibility with Sony's hi-res LDAC Bluetooth codec, and the great sound quality that can result.

from R20 300 / connecteddevices.co.za



POWERADD ENERGYCELL 5000

More capacious powerbanks than this are available. But they're heavier and more expensive than the EnergyCell 5000 – and anyway, do you intend to be away from the mains for any longer than a weekend?

R250 (import) / poweradd.mall.co.uk

FITNESS

From blood, sweat and tears in the gym to the very worst of the winter weather, these earphones have the power to keep on running even if you can't

DOTTIR

If you're looking for a set of headphones that'll survive the most testing conditions, this might be it. Designed by a pair of world Crossfit champions, they're built for going into battle during multi-discipline workouts. And with big battery life, IPX7 durability, 13mm drivers and lots of extras like wireless charging, they've got a package of specs that suggests – on paper at least – a serious all-rounder.

For a start, they're sweatproof and whoopsie-drops-in-the-sink-proof. So even if your gym-floor game isn't quite at World's Fittest Athlete level, you can still enter beast mode knowing that your buds won't break before you do. They're chunkier than

some in-ears but at 9.3g each they're still pretty light for an ear-hook type. That hook design also guarantees brilliant stay-put fit, helped by 12 different eartip options in the box that make it easy for even the fussiest lugholes to find a reliable fit.

The sound isn't best in class but it's big and bassy enough to kick your ass to do an extra rep... not to mention drowning out that terrible gym mix of guttural grunts and Euro house.

But it's the battery life that really stands out here, with a whopping 12hrs of playback in the buds and a massive 60hrs of backup in the case. Although the buds are light, the metal case is rather weighty at 84g – so not a great choice for adventures without

a pack. But then, with that half-day of juice life in the buds, you won't often need it. The case is designed to be robust for chucking in a bag, but it's also nicely tactile so you won't be all butter-fingers with it.

The earphones are available in two colours, white or ash grey, with orange detailing for the controls. Chuck in easy-to-use controls plus passable ANC and an ambient awareness mode, along with wireless charging and in-ear detection with auto-pause/play, and you've got a set of adventure-proof fitness headphones that punch well above their price tag.

Price R2 400 (import) / dottiraudio.com

STUFF SAYS An excellent-value all-rounder built to survive any fitness battle ★★★★★☆

NOW
ADD
THESE



GARMIN INSTINCT 2

This multisport watch packs all the smarts of a regular GPS timepiece into a ruggedised frame that's styled to take hard knocks. It's waterproof to 100m, with a fibre-reinforced polymer case and scratch-resistant Gorilla Glass display. R6 800 / capeunionmart.co.za



WHOOOP 4.0

Designed to give you a window into your own durability, the Whoop's daily readouts help you understand how much more your body can take. It uses heart-rate sensors and will tell you if it's time to go hard, or go and watch telly. from R600/m (import) / whoop.com

ALTERNATIVELY...



BEATS FIT PRO

R3 500 / incredible.co.za
The sweat-resistant Fit Pros might not survive a long dip in deep water like some buds, but in practice their IPX4 rating is enough to withstand all but the worst conditions. They pack an impressive 30hr case-plus-buds combined battery life, ANC with transparency mode and rich, punchy sound... along with a rock-solid fit that's as good as it gets. Stuff says ★★★★★



JABRA ELITE 4 ACTIVE

R2 200 / incredible.co.za
Buds don't come much more minimal and compact than these Jabras. And with IP57 protection against water and sweat, their workout durability is right up there. The wingtip-free design won't lock so firmly in your ears, but with solid sound and custom EQ, plus reasonably good ANC and 28hrs' total battery life, this is brilliance on a budget. Stuff says ★★★★★



JAYBIRD VISTA 2

R3 410 / desertcart.co.za
With IP68 and military-spec ratings for protection against dust, water, sweat and drops, the light and compact Vista 2 buds are as adventure-proof as true wireless buds get. The 24hr total battery life is decent and they kick out rich, fully customisable sound. ANC with transparency mode and a weatherproof case complete a smart box of extra trickery. Stuff says ★★★★★



SHOKZ OPENRUN PRO

R3 500 / sportsmanswarehouse.co.za
These bone-conductors are safer on the roads than noise-cancellers; just don't expect big, thumping bass. At 29g they're super-light, and the titanium neckband design means there's no risk of them falling. This newest edition is also IP55-rated to withstand moisture and dust. The 10hr battery life is OK but there's no charging case. Stuff says ★★★☆☆



Zoomin' behaviour

The IPX4 splash-proof case supports wireless charging. A 15-minute juice-up unlocks 3hrs of tunes so they're always ready to roll.



Bigger time sensuality

The Dottirs pack an almost unrivalled 82hr buds-plus-case total playback time; this drops to a still-impressive 54hrs with the ANC on.

Fit's oh so quiet

For when you need to drown out more than your own internal pain monologue, the ANC claims 35dB of gym-bantz reduction.



On your zone again

The revamped headband has a 'centre-relief zone' (aka some clever padding) designed to make the HXs comfier for longer.

Angels of bashes

Intuitive touch controls on the right earcup's central metal plate let you play and pause, skip tracks, adjust the volume and accept or reject calls.

Hero of the worn

Comfort is king thanks to ear-cushions crafted from soft lambskin, along with memory foam that adapts to the curves of your ear.

● NOISE-CANCELLING

Many of the 'phones in this guide offer ANC, but these five are the specialists at silencing the world to leave you and Cliff Richard in your own sonic bubble

BANG & OLUFSEN BEOPLAY HX

Danish firm Bang & Olufsen is known for its lush design work, so it's no surprise that its latest luxury wireless cans are a work of art. Available in black, dark maroon, 'sand' or this eminently Instagrammable 'timber' finish, the Beoplay HX headphones sport soft leather and shiny recycled aluminium for an eco-friendly premium look. And the lightweight design feels really nice, even worn for hours at a time.

But it's not just about how they look and feel. The HXs also sound fantastic. Delivered via two custom 40mm drivers, their audio output is warm and detailed. B&O's next-gen adaptive ANC changes to suit the sounds around you, or you can turn

it off and choose how much outside noise you want to let in. The genuinely useful B&O app also lets you choose from different sound profiles, such as 'commute' and 'podcast'.

Automatic wear-detection will pause whatever you're listening to when you take the headphones off; but if you find this a bit keen, as we did, you can reign in the sensitivity on the app – or just turn it off altogether if it's driving you nuts.

You'll get up to 35hrs of playback, which is more or less the equivalent of five working days, depending on your skiving levels, and the cans take around 3hrs to charge up fully via USB-C. The automatic standby setting will turn them off after 15

minutes of inactivity, which is good to know if you've ever turned up for a long-haul flight with your noise-cancelling powers vanquished because you accidentally left your headphones on in your bag.

And speaking of stowing-away time, the earcups fold flat to fit into the sturdy zip-up case – which also features a handy compartment for storing cables.

OK, if you want to be sensible, you might be able to get better value for money elsewhere... but these cans not only deliver excellent audio with customisable noise-cancelling, but are also a design classic.

Price R10 000 / bang-olufsen.com

STUFF SAYS The best-looking pair of comfy noise-cancelling cans in town ★★★★★



ALTERNATIVELY...



BOSE QC EARBUDS

R6 900 / takealot.com
Bringing Bose's QuietComfort tech into a set of earbuds was a masterstroke. These in-ears may be a little bulky but they fit like a dream thanks to their clever anchoring eartips. The ANC tech lets you choose exactly how much of the world you want to filter out, while IPX4 water-resistance means no dramas if you get caught in the rain.

Stuff says ★★★★★



AUDIO-TECHNICA ATH-CKS50TW

R5 940 / wantitall.co.za
These noise-busting buds from musicians' favourite AT boast a phenomenal 50hrs of playback time courtesy of the charging case. In reality, you'll get 15hrs of continuous music with the ANC on before they need a power-up from the box. They're secure and comfy with impressive audio chops to match, making them perfect for commuting.

Stuff says ★★★★★



KLIPSCH T5 II ANC

R4 000 / takealot.com
They may be pricey, but these in-ears are pure class. The maker's first wireless buds with ANC, these beauties come with eartips in six sizes for the perfect fit. Housed in a classy case, the earbuds offer great sound combined with quality construction. Dirac HD tech brings rich audio while gesture controls let you accept or reject calls with a nod or head-shake.

Stuff says ★★★★★



PHILIPS FIDELIO T1

R9 400 / wantitall.co.za
Although the case is mega-chunky and they don't look that great, these in-ears lay down aces where it matters most: sound quality is excellent, and they offer some of the best ANC we've heard. Battery life is also among the top dogs, with around 9hrs of tunes from the buds if you have the noise-cancelling switched on. The case packs another 25hrs.

Stuff says ★★★★★☆

NOW
ADD
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EARMEN SPARROW

This nifty little portable DAC boosts the sound quality coming from your laptop or phone. The tiny gadget turns hi-res audio into the clearest possible analogue music, and works with iOS, Android, macOS and Windows.

R7 050 / wantitall.co.za



SONY NW-A105

If you're looking for a hi-res audio player that won't break the bank, try this Sony, available from non-cork-sniffy places including Currys and Richer Sounds. It's even compatible with the MQA format for top audio quality from small file sizes.

R4 000 (import) / sony.co.uk

GAMING

Whether it's sofa-like comfiness, the clarity to hear enemies creeping up on you or crystal-clear microphones, every serious player's lair needs a great headset

STEELSERIES ARCTIS 9

This is a highly reliable pair of 2.4GHz wireless gaming cans. Available either for PC and PlayStation or for Xbox (look for the 'X' added to the name), they offer everything you could need. Most importantly they sound fantastic, with lag-free audio and meaty 40mm neodymium drivers.

This leads to a wide soundstage so you can hear what's coming from all around you, proving particularly useful if you're playing something like *Apex Legends* and you're unsure of the location of your enemy.

And beyond the practical benefit, they just make your gaming a more immersive and involving experience, thanks to the way the sound grabs

your attention and doesn't let go. PC gamers also benefit from DTS:X, which provides a form of virtual surround-sound system, ensuring that whatever you're playing or listening to sounds suitably all-encompassing.

Build quality is similarly premium, with leatherette earpads that look and feel great. Players won't need to worry about any sweatiness or discomfort while using these for an extended session. Controls are neatly tucked away on the earcups: power, pairing, volume and mute, along with a ChatMix control wheel for tweaking the game/talk blend.

If you're multitasking, it's possible to set up a simultaneous Bluetooth

connection so you can take calls or listen to music while you play. Combined with ChatMix, that's a useful feature for those times when you can't settle on just one thing. A Discord-certified microphone also means you can talk, scream and howl at your friends with plenty of clarity, boosted by noise-cancelling tech to avoid deafening yourself (or anyone else) with feedback.

SteelSeries promises over 20hrs of battery life, but in our tests we frequently found the Arctis 9 headset surpassing that figure. Which is handy, as you'll soon wonder how you gamed without them.

Price R4 000 / evetech.co.za

STUFF SAYS Cans with plenty of features to improve your gaming experience ★★★★★

NOW
ADD
THESE



CREATIVE SOUND BLASTER G3

Creative offers a cheap solution if you want to be able to adjust EQ presets and even enhance the sound of footsteps in console games. You can easily mix in-game audio and chat so it's balanced just right for your needs. **R540 (import) / creative.com**



HYPERX QUADCAST S

Also a fine choice for streaming or podcasting, this USB condenser mic lights up – and you can customise it with HyperX's software. There are four pickup patterns to choose from, so you can set it up to hear exactly what you want it to. **R4 330 / wantitall.co.za**

ALTERNATIVELY...



CORSAIR VIRTUOSO WIRELESS XT

R3 900 / evetech.co.za
Expensive yet offering phenomenal sound quality, the Corsair Virtuoso Wireless XT headset offers a variety of options including simultaneous connections, hi-fi sound and aptX support, depending on how you hook it up. Dolby Atmos is exclusive to PC but other systems still sound suitably expansive. **Stuff says ★★★★★**



JBL QUANTUM ONE

R4 800 / incredible.co.za
ANC means you can block out all around you with the JBL Quantum One and focus on the whuppage of ass. Alongside that is some fancy head-tracking tech for PC gamers that means you can always hear exactly where everything in-game is located. Comfy thanks to memory-foam earcups, the only downside is that this headset is wired only. **Stuff says ★★★★★☆**



MICROSOFT XBOX WIRELESS HEADSET

R1 900 / incredible.co.za
Microsoft rights one of the wrongs of the Xbox One era and gives the Xbox Series X/S a proper wireless headset. For the money you'll struggle to find a more impressive option than this, first-party or otherwise. But it's definitely for Xbox and PC players only, and we probably wouldn't use it for day-to-day music listening. **Stuff says ★★★★★**



HYPERX CLOUD II

R1 400 / evetech.co.za
Packing in a USB audio soundcard that offers up 7.1 virtual surround sound means the HyperX Cloud II is a tweaker's dream. It's possible to create a truly personalised experience with the plentiful features here, and a wide soundstage means you can always hear what's going on. A detachable microphone and memory-foam on both headband and cups prove useful too. **Stuff says ★★★★★**

Behind the casque

A decent gaming headset will give you an advantage in hearing when an enemy is coming close, and from which direction.

Soothe criminal

Gaming headsets can also double up as a great way to listen to music or watch a film without disturbing the rest of the household.

Feel the world

Single-player games are also enhanced by a good headset as it makes things more immersive. You'll soon lose yourself in a game's atmosphere.



She's leaving foam

A selection of silicone and memory-foam earbuds means a comfortable fit is easy to achieve – and the IE 900s will stay that way for hours on end.

Affixing a hole

You get three detachable cables with three different plug types, meaning they're ready to connect to the output of any audiophile music player.

A grey in the life

The intricate machining of the earbuds results in a tactile finish that responds to light in a number of different ways. Which is nice.

MONEY NO OBJECT

You can't stuff caviar into your ears – well, you could but it'd be frightfully messy – so why not treat them to some sophisticated audio luxury instead?

SENNHEISER IE 900

There can only be one reason to choose a wired in-ear headphone over its wireless alternative, and that's sound quality.

Oh, you can buy a pair of true wireless in-ears that sound very good indeed (and we've already recommended a few); but for supreme signal stability and coherence, wireless will never be able to match wired.

So the Sennheiser IE 900s are for those people who take mobile listening seriously... and people who have paid money for a nice digital audio player, because as we all know, the headphone socket has fallen from fashion rather heavily where smartphones are concerned. These buds, it would appear, are for listeners

who are as passionate about sound quality as Sennheiser itself.

So while your R25 000 doesn't buy you all that much stuff, the stuff it does buy you is brilliantly engineered and flawlessly built. The earbuds themselves are machined from a single billet of aluminium and milled on five axes; the result is a little in-ear monitor that looks not unlike a piece of jewellery.

Yet Sennheiser has somehow found room inside for a triple-chamber absorption system and an acoustic vortex on the inside, along with a 7mm wide-band transducer. As far as the transducers are concerned, Sennheiser reckons it's nailed the lowest unit-to-unit variation ever

achieved in miniature dynamic drivers like these.

There's an absolute stack of evidence in support of Sennheiser's fanaticism available, but really you only need listen to the IE 900s in order to realise just how much that hard work has paid off. In every aspect of music reproduction – low-frequency punch and control, transient response, dynamic headroom, rhythmic positivity, you name it – they absolutely knock it out of the park. In short, they're more faithful to the source, more downright musical, than even the most expensive true wireless alternative could hope to be.

Price R24 720 / takealot.com

STUFF SAYS Unbeatable high-end in-ear performance, and great looks too ★★★★★

NOW
ADD
THESE



ASTELL&KERN SR25 MkII

Long known for building some of the best portable audio players around, Astell&Kern has taken things to the next level with the SR25 MkII. It's an especially good fit for the IE 900 buds thanks to its 4.4mm balanced output socket.

R24 660 /
wantitall.co.za



TIDAL

The A&K player allows you to install the Tidal app, and (as long as you're paying for the highest tier) that allows you to send MQA-powered Tidal Masters files to your Sennheisers. The resulting sound is enough to make your ears weep.

from R140/m /
tidal.com



ALTERNATIVELY...



AUDEZE LCD-3

R34 410 /
audiohead.co.za

These stunning luxury headphones use the latest-gen version of Audeze's planar magnetic tech, which employs twin sets of magnets with a wafer-thin diaphragm between them. The result is powerful and detailed sound to replicate tunes as the artist intended them, while the drivers won't deteriorate with age. Best used with a headphone amp.

Stuff says ★★★★★



ROSSON RAD-0

R50 000 (import) /
rossonaudiodesign.com

Many of the words that appeal to audiophiles are here: open-backed, planar magnetic, rare earth magnets. Mind you, many of the words that appeal to the rest of us apply here too: insight, detail, dynamic potency, fun. So no matter which camp you fall in, these Rossons are bound to delight you. As long as your head is big enough for their sheer size, that is.

Stuff says ★★★★★



FOCAL UTOPIA

R74 000 (import) /
focal.com

One look at the price and the brand-name is enough to make us anxious and excited. The Utopias are recklessly expensive headphones – but they're also among the finest available at any price. Nothing is beyond them when it comes to delivering music, in full and with complete conviction. They're a stupendously accomplished listen.

Stuff says ★★★★★



SHURE KSE1200

R66 000 /
wantitall.co.za

Not every pair of in-ear monitors comes with its own amp. But then again, not every pair of in-ear monitors is an electrostatic design and not every pair sells for well over fifty grand. If you're interested in hearing every scrap of information in a recording, no matter how deep it's buried, then the KSE1200s could constitute a bit of a bargain.

Stuff says ★★★★★

INSTANT UPGRADES SAMSUNG Z FOLD3



FIRST ADD
THESE...



ONE SAMSUNG GALAXY S PEN FOLD EDITION

It takes a special kind of S Pen stylus to write on the Galaxy Z Fold3 – try a regular Samsung scribbler and you'll get an error prompt. Once you hook up this more delicate digi-pen, you can enjoy pressure-sensitive scribing at up to 4096 levels and full access to Samsung's excellent Notes software. **R1 000 / samsung.com/za**

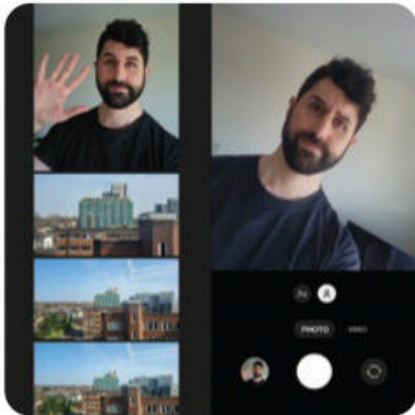
TWO KENSINGTON UH1400P DOCK

Samsung's DeX desktop interface turns a phone into a mini-PC when hooked up to a monitor. Add this USB-C mobile dock to the mix for HDMI out, Ethernet in, fast-charging power via USB-C, two SD card slots and three USB ports. It's a tiny dongle that brings desktop-grade connectivity. **R1 080 / geewiz.co.za**

THREE ANKER 735 CHARGER

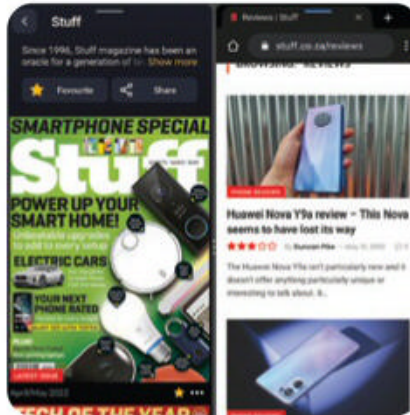
With the Z Fold3 only able to fast-charge at up to 25W, this 65W charger may seem like overkill; but with two USB-C ports and one full-sized USB, it will simultaneously fast-charge your phone, laptop and earbuds at full speed, making it one of the most compact multi-points to grace your wall sockets. **R1 200 [import] / anker.com**



NOW TRY
THIS...

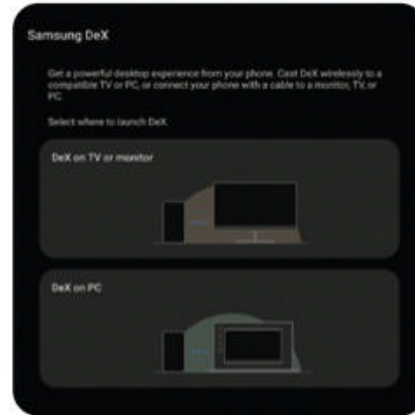
1 BETA YOUR SELFIE

The under-display camera on the inner screen may look nearly invisible, but selfies taken on it aren't great. One workaround is to take selfies on the cover display camera; but if you need to use the inner selfie-camera, turn the flash on and the giant screen will light up in a glorious eruption of blinding brilliance to help the hampered under-display sensor get the best shot possible.



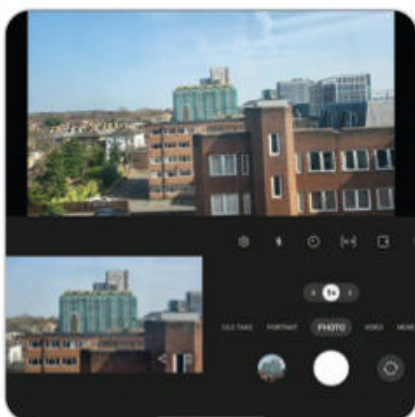
2 SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE

Yes, the Z Fold3 has a crease down the middle where it folds. Use it by firing up split-screen multitasking. This flings one app to each side of the fold, turning it into a natural divider. To activate it, open your task manager so you can see all active tasks, long-press an open app icon and select 'Open in split-screen view'. The other half will list the apps you can pair with it.



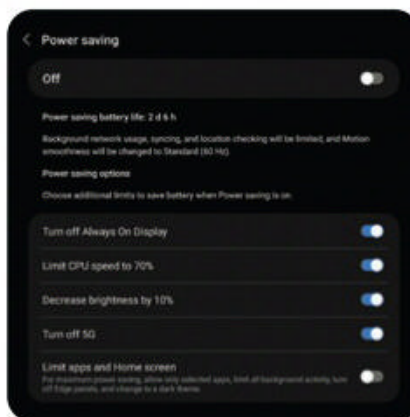
3 FLEX YOUR DEX

Connect your Z Fold3 to a monitor or PC, swipe down for quick toggles, and tap the DeX icon to project a desktop interface. In DeX, work across windows as you would on a laptop or desktop, and hook up a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse – or use the Fold's inner screen as a trackpad. Whether editing docs, browsing the web or even gaming, it's more comfortable in DeX.



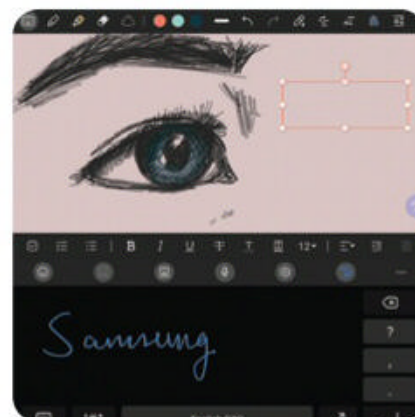
4 FOLD STEADY

With the camera app open, half-fold the phone, stand it on a flat surface and eke out even better-quality photos. The interface even splits to display a viewfinder at the top and camera controls at the bottom. The camera also has another trick up its unfolded sleeve: tap the 'half-filled square' icon in the corner of the screen and your subjects will be able to see themselves for optimal pouting.



5 KEEP ON RUNNING

With a normal-sized battery despite its large inner screen, staying alive on the Z Fold3 isn't a given – but you can do a few things to help. First, drop the screen refresh rate by hopping into the display settings, tapping 'Motion smoothness' and selecting Standard. Next fire up Dark mode and turn adaptive brightness on. Finally, swipe down for quick toggles and tap Power Saver.



6 GET IT WRITE

The S Pen Fold Edition (see opposite) is more than just a drawing tool. To activate a handwriting keyboard and scrawl on the inner screen, tap a text entry field to launch the default keyboard; next, tap the icon above the keyboard with a 'T' in it. Now your foldable will convert your scribbles into words. You can also access a host of features in Settings by selecting Advanced then S Pen.

THEN GET
THESE...

XBOX GAME PASS ULTIMATE

With its big screen and ace 5G data speeds, we were able to fire up console-grade games and play with a paired gamepad.

R220/m



ADOBE CC EXPRESS

With a bunch of free templates, CC Express gives you the power to create graphics on the go – and the folding screen provides plenty of editing space.

from Free



COMIXOLOGY

Comics on the Z Fold3 look stunning – and if you've got an Amazon Prime or Kindle Unlimited sub, you can enjoy access to hundreds of titles, including *Attack On Titan* and *Star Wars*.

Free with Prime

MINIATURE MOUNTS



The bendy bracket
Joby PodZilla

Any tripod can stand up on a table, but it takes special monkey skills to wrap around a railing. This malleable mount is made to grip irregular objects. Good for up to 1kg of gear, its articulating limbs can be shaped to suit all sorts of surfaces, and a bubble level shows when your framing is straight.
from R2 040 / wantitall.co.za



The compact critter
Manfrotto Pixi Evo

Styled like it could scuttle off to conquer the planet while you're distracted by your aperture settings, this dinky plinth can support the weight of a standard DSLR camera. Its sliding legs allow you to work at two heights, while the ball head lets you tilt to portrait orientation.
R1300 / outdoorphoto.co.za



The tabletop tower
Novo Mantis T3

You know what they say about small packages? If a tiny-but-tall tripod is your idea of a good thing, this one proves the adage. It measures just 21.5cm when closed, with twist-lock legs unlocking a max height of 27cm, and its carbon-fibre construction can carry a 5kg payload.
R1400 (import) / novo-photo.com

HEAVYWEIGHT HOLDERS



The brawny base
3 Legged Thing Winston 2.0

Hoisting something 23 times your own weight is a pretty Herculean feat. While the knurled knobs on this muscular mount are more workhorse than classical warrior, it's certainly a heavy lifter: standing up to 1.85m tall, it can shoulder 40kg of kit. Multiple mounting points make accessorising a cinch.
R4 100 / outdoorphoto.co.za

**UPVOTED
TRIPODS**

Wobbly hands won't help you shoot sharp – in search of a stable base, Stuff attached our snappers to nine of the finest camera stands



The pivoting platform
Vanguard VEO 3+

Standard shafts can lift and lower your lens, but one axis is a little linear. Free your framing with this all-angle stand: the central column is attached to a swivelling bracket, so you can go high for a classic aspect, or swing low for a fresh perspective.
from R5 000 (import) / vanguardworld.co.uk

PORTABLE PODIUMS



The streamlined stand
Peak Design Travel Tripod

Size isn't everything, but dimensions matter if you're packing light. This full-size stand folds down to the diameter of a water bottle, with no bulky knobs. Despite its sleek design it can support up to 9kg, with legs that deploy rapidly for instant stability so you'll never miss the moment.
from R7 770 / ormsdirect.co.za



The featherweight frame
Gitzo Traveler

Putting your head between your legs is usually a last resort. But the brace position is standard form for this touring tripod: its limbs hinge up around the central column to create a tidy travel package. At 895g it won't max out your baggage allowance, yet its 10kg load limit is cleared for beefier gear.
from R5 000 / takealot.com



The everyday easel
Kenro Karoo Travel Tripod Kit

Want a top tripod that doesn't demand top dollar? Magnesium alloy might make this one heavier than some, but it's lighter on price. And it's no knock-off option: built for sturdiness, it has a triple-action ballhead with quick-release plate, while the column can be reversed for action at ground level.
R2 400 (import) / kenro.co.uk

**HOW TO
DECIDE**

1 Screw top

Most tripods are topped with a screw mount. Smaller cameras tend to use a 1/4in-20 thread, while heavier pro gear is often 3/8in-16. Many stands let you switch between the two.



2 Spinning top

A fixed thread is fine for shooting straight ahead, but creative compositions can require a more complex mount. So a lot of tripods let you tilt and swivel your camera using a ballhead.

The acrobatic accessory

Benro Bat

Like bats, photographers don't like to be cornered. But if you do find yourself shooting from a tight spot, this agile frame will adapt to the challenge. It can't hang from a branch, but its three pivoting legs can be separately set to any one of five angles. Up against a wall? Try one down, two up for a firm perch to impress any flying mammal. And you don't need sonar to keep subjects in your sightline, just the dual-panning aluminium ballhead.

R7 300 /

outdoorphoto.co.za



3 Top loader

Not all tripods will support the same payload. Some stands max out with premium compacts, while others are strong enough to support a full-frame DSLR. Check before you buy.



4 Top of the world

Taller tripods can extend beyond 1.8m – handy if you're taking headshots for a basketball team. Some come with swappable central columns: a shorter shaft can help with smaller subjects.

Don't stop moviein'

Panasonic's long-awaited GH6 is bristling with video-shooting possibilities – but does a Micro Four Thirds camera still make sense in 2022?

R40 000 (body only – import) / panasonic.com

■ The GH6 has a classic DSLR body shape and it's none the worse for that: the big grip on the right fits the hand well, and the OLED viewfinder and dials all feel like they're where they should be. You can get stuff done without being overwhelmed by options.

■ This is an ace camera for movies, and a lot of that is down to the sheer choice it offers. Format, resolution, framerate, bitrate, picture profile... there's something here for everyone, and the 4K footage looks absolutely fantastic.

■ The contrast-based AF isn't quite as fast or accurate as the hybrid systems used by Sony and Canon, but the in-body image stabilisation offers a staggering 7.5 stops of compensation, smoothing out motion and stabilising handheld footage.

■ Connectivity is a strong point. There's a full-size HDMI Type A output plus headphone and mic sockets. For internal storage you get two card slots: one for SD, one for speedy CFexpress Type B.

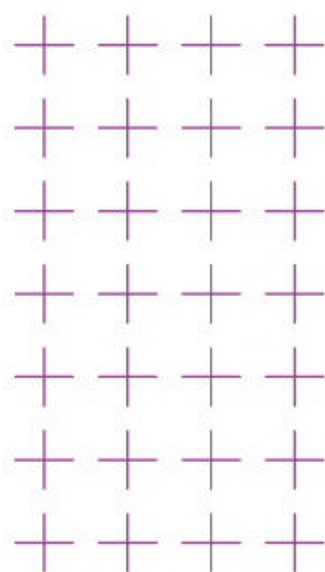
■ The GH6 isn't really designed for stills, but it can take them – and very quickly too. It will rattle off shots at 75fps using the electronic shutter, and up to 14fps with the mechanical shutter. That's not bad for a camera that's much more concerned with video.

Tech specs

Sensor 25.2MP Live MOS
ISO range 50–25,600 (extended)
Burst speed Up to 75fps **Video** Up to 5.7K @ 60fps **Display** 3in 1.84m-dot free-angle TFT LCD
EVF 3.68m-dot OLED **Connectivity** HDMI, USB-C, CFexpress Type B, SD, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth **Dimensions** 138x100x100mm, 823g

Mess club party

The body is built on a rugged magnesium alloy frame and can hold off splashes and dust. It's relatively small and lightweight at 823g.



Swing it all back

The 3in screen can be tilted to face almost any direction, while the front recording buttons are very welcome when you're not behind the camera. Red lights on front and back also let you know when video is being recorded.



Blew in a million

The new forced-fan cooling system requires two vents and results in a big bump at the back, but it means you can record at any resolution and framerate for as long as you have storage space without the GH6 overheating.

STUFF SAYS This is easily Panasonic's best mirrorless camera yet for video ★★★★★

GH6, when it comes to video modes, you're our number one

The GH6 is a wonderful camera for amateur enthusiasts and even professional filmmakers, packed to the brim with creative potential – and that Micro Four Thirds sensor is the key to its appeal and affordability. For R40 000 there's a heck of a lot of potential here, particularly in the hands of a skilled enthusiast able to make the most of the GH6's incredible range of movie modes.

Hold on, arm coming

Flip the switch, retire to your armchair and wait for the music to start: Pro-Ject has launched its first automatic turntable

Rock on wood

The A1 only comes in black and isn't the most chic-looking turntable around, but you can rely on Pro-Ject for solid build quality.

R19740 / wantitall.co.za

■ The Pro-Ject A1 looks... well, like a record player. There's a resonance-rejecting wooden chassis with a dust cover on the top and feet at the bottom. A belt-drive moves the platter, and there's a very decent Ortofon cartridge (already aligned and adjusted for tracking) attached to the tonearm.

■ As well as the OM 10 cartridge there's also an integrated phono stage. To turn it on or off you have to take the slipmat off and search for a tiny switch through one of the platter's cutaways. You won't mistake it, though – it's next to some rather dangerous-looking exposed wiring.

■ Pressing 'start' makes the platter turn, then the tonearm lifts itself into position and lowers itself into the groove. At the end of the side, the tonearm returns to its cradle and the platter stops spinning. That's the beauty of automatic; the only problem occurs when you want to play 12in vinyl at 45rpm, which requires some coaxing.

■ In terms of performance, the A1 delivers busy recordings as a unified whole. The low end is bold and punchy, there's substantial crispness to treble, and it's highly eloquent with vocals. There's a real smoothness to the whole package.

■ It's only in dynamic headroom that the A1 is in any way exposed. It just doesn't breathe deeply enough to put distance between low-key quiet stuff and angsty garage-punk moments.

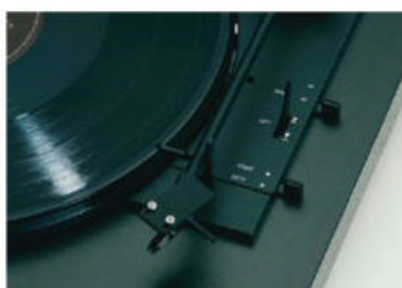
Tech specs

Cartridge Ortofon OM 10 **Speed** 33/45rpm **Connectivity** Phono RCA (cable included) **Dimensions** 430x365x130 mm, 5.6kg



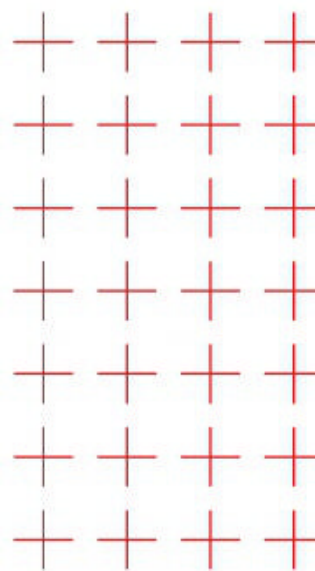
The dock of the play

There's a pair of analogue RCA interconnects hard-wired into the rear panel, along with an earth cable to prevent hum. All you need to do is put your A1 somewhere level then connect it to your system and the mains.



Sole finger

There are three controls on the right. One is to switch between 33 and 45rpm, one is to lift or lower the tonearm manually, and one is labelled 'start/stop'. That's the bit that makes the A1 an automatic turntable.



STUFF SAYS Plug-and-play convenience and entertaining, expressive sound ★★★★★

Not perfect, but this hands-off turntable has stacks of skills

The A1 is the latest in a very long line of extremely good-value Pro-Ject turntables. The addition of a phono stage (even if it seems to have been chucked in at the last minute) and a degree of automation only sweeten the deal. As long as you don't think an 'automatic' record player will put your vinyl back in its sleeve or anything, there's no reason not to have a long, hard think about the A1.

Spangled up in blue

Garmin's colourful AMOLED display is a touchscreen, so it can be used for navigating watch menu screens and will help you get around richly detailed maps quickly and easily.

Shelter from the torn

The new running-centric Stamina metric looks at heart rate, pace and training history to tell you how far you can run and make sure you don't empty the tank when you still have a long way to go.



Buckets of range

Multi-GNSS mode means the Epix can use multiple frequencies from satellite systems to make sure it's accurately tracking your routes. This is especially helpful in built-up areas.

FIT TECH

All the gadgets you need to get yourself fit, fitter, fittest

Garmin Epix

R17 000 / totalsports.co.za

Garmin has been helping us track runs, long weekend bike rides and dips in the pool for decades now – so when the Apple Watch started to step on its turf, it decided to react. Garmin excels at sports watches that behave more like smartwatches; and with the Epix, it took one of its forgotten ranges and gave it a modern makeover.

The Epix is built for adventures, keeping things light with a titanium bezel and case on its priciest edition – hosting a vibrant colour AMOLED display that can stay on 24/7 to show off stats and make viewing maps a joy.

BLOOD AND THE TRACKS

Beneath that display there are sensors to track heart rate and blood oxygen levels, with a barometric altimeter to track you heading up and down hilly terrain. Garmin's new multi-frequency positioning means you're getting top-dog location tracking, even when you hit problematic signal areas around tall buildings and trees.

Garmin also packs the Epix with features to make it useful when you're not heading off to exercise: replacing your wallet to pay for a coffee, letting you play music sans smartphone and keeping a close eye on WhatsApp group chats.

Crucially, it won't let you down on the battery front either. Even with that colour display and a bucketload of features, the Epix can go a couple of weeks away from the charger and even last a week with the screen in always-on mode.

If you like the idea of the a sports watch powerhouse that looks and behaves like a smartwatch, that's what you'll get here.



Apple Watch Series 7

Apple's latest Watch comes with better protection against the elements, a bigger display to show off stats and access to an app storefront that can turn it into a better all-round fitness companion. And faster charging support means you can top it up before you head out to work or hit the hay. **R8 800 / incredible.co.za**



Garmin Vivomove Sport

The Vivomove Sport is a break from the fitness watch norm, marrying an analogue look with a digital display baked into the bottom that can track steps and heart rate. It has Garmin's Body Battery energy monitor to tell you when you're ready to workout, and is itself fit to last up to five days between charges. **R3 600 / totalsports.co.za**



Amazfit GTS 3

Amazfit has a huge range of smartwatches and the GTS 3 is one that gives you good looks and strong features to match. It's got a square body like an Apple Watch, but plays nicely with Android phones as well as iPhones. It packs a high-quality AMOLED screen and has modes to track over 150 different sports. **R3 300 / geewiz.co.za**



Huawei Watch GT Runner

Huawei wants a piece of the running-watch action – and the GT Runner is packing in plenty for runners. You get AI training plans to help you nail a 5K or marathon PB, while it can dish out race time predictions and even score you on your running ability. It also supports pairing up to an external heart monitor. **R7 500 / incredible.co.za**

NOW
ADD
THESE...



THERABODY RECOVERYAIR JETBOOTS

When the recovery shake doesn't quite cut it, these boots deliver a massage to both legs.

R32 000 / wantitall.co.za



MYZONE MZ-SWITCH

A heart-rate monitor you can wear on your wrist, arm or chest, the MZ-Switch flips between sensor types for better accuracy.

R2 400 / mifitness.co.za



FIIT

The slick fitness app is available on everything from phones to TVs, and now has hook-ups with Assault Fitness gear for more ways to punish yourself.

from R200/m / fiit.tv

BUYING
ADVICE

LINK IT UP

You might not love the app your watch needs, or 100% trust its data, so the ability to hook up to external sensors and third-party apps can help get a truer picture of progress.

MAP IT OUT

If you're an explorer at heart, look for a watch that can help you navigate your way and upload routes, so you can plan out adventures and where to take fuelling pitstops.

GET IT DOWN

Don't know what an air squat or a tempo run is? Look for a watch that can build plans and lead you from workout start to finish, to make sure you get a good sweat on.

FITNESS WATCHES

Another five options for smartening up your wrist in both senses

NOW
ADD
THESE...



HYPERICE VENOM BACK

A belt with a screen that would be at home in a sci-fi film, the Venom Back applies heat to relieve aches in your core area.

R4 600 / gear4u.co.za



JABRA ELITE 4 ACTIVE

Jabra's wireless earbuds are fit to battle the rain, with ANC to block out gym noise and a transparent mode for safe running.

R2 200 / incredible.co.za



UNDER ARMOUR VELOCITI FLOW WIND 2

The Wind 2 ditches the rubber outsole to hug the ground, while a sensor tracks form.

R3 500 / underarmour.co.za



Polar Grit X Pro Titan

Polar's upgraded outdoor watch plants sapphire glass on top of its display to guard against scratches, with a titanium bezel to keep things light when you're going long. You can plot routes using Komoot and make use of Polar's best training and analysis features, including fuelling reminders.

R11 500 / totalsports.co.za



Garmin Fenix 7X

The largest member of Garmin's outdoor watch series seeks out the sun, using solar power to help it last a month between charges – so you can make the best use of its mapping and navigation features, covering everything from skiing to trail running. It even makes room for an LED torch.

R17 500 / totalsports.co.za



Garmin Instinct 2 Solar

This outdoor watch with a quirky screen comes in two sizes and five versions, including a Surf edition that keeps you up to speed with tidal conditions. It'll help you navigate your way on land and water, and also finds room for safety modes in case you need to raise the alarm. Just make sure your phone's nearby.

R8 700 / takealot.com



Wahoo Elemnt Rival

If you're a cyclist or triathlete, you're likely to have some Wahoo kit in your armoury. The Rival can automatically change tracking modes between legs in tri events, and lets you go big or small with real-time workout data stats. It also hooks up to Wahoo's indoor bike trainers and computers.

R7 000 / cyclelab.com

Coros Pace 2

R4 400 / takealot.com

Coros might not be a household name just yet, but it's a sports watch maker on the rise. And while the Pace 2 is not the

priciest member of its small watch family, it does hit the sweet spot for price and features that you can put to good use for both indoor and outdoor exercise.

It's super-light at 29g, to make sure it doesn't weigh you down on long-distance runs, and is a good fit for tracking swims. Grab it in one of the new Speed Series looks and you can also add a nice pop of colour to your wrist.

ELEVATE ME DATA

All Pace 2 models are primarily made for runners, cyclists, swimmers and triathletes, serving up key metrics with support for additional sensors to give runners and riders more data to pore over. When you're training indoors it can count reps, with muscle heatmaps available to make sure you're not neglecting those upper body workouts.

Coros's Evolab platform offers deep insights into your training, including telling you when fatigue is hitting and you should focus on recovery. There's also advanced data to help runners closely examine technique and form. And if you're worried about missing out on kudos for a big ride, you can send workouts over to Strava and other apps like Training Peaks.

The Pace 2 can go long, giving you up to 20 days' battery life and over a day of tracking outdoor activities. It scrimps a little on the smartwatch features – but if you want to fill your head with stats, and accurate ones at that, that's where the Coros Pace 2 delivers.

BUYING
ADVICE

GO LONG

If you're more ultra runner than weekly gym-goer, make sure you have access to power-saving modes to keep you tracking for longer while still getting the data you need.

GO AHEAD

Grab a watch that can shape workout schedules through insights into training load and recovery time, to make the right calls over when to exercise and when to rest.

GO LIGHT

A big watch might seem like a burden to bear, but if you opt for a lighter design that uses a titanium case and a nylon band you might find it surprisingly weightless.

Stop seethin'

The lightweight polymer case is partnered with a nylon strap that's available in colours aplenty and, crucially, includes a more breathable band to wear when you're out on sweaty runs.

Cut your spare

When you're not cardio blasting, the Pace 2's strength training mode feeds into muscle heatmaps to show you the groups you've worked on over weeks and months to build that strong base.



Silence lit

It can leave the built-in backlight on during workout time and keep it bright enough to let you see your stats without hammering the battery life. When you're done, it'll simply switch it off.

Don't look slack

Oura makes sure you get a ring that fits by sending a sizing kit first. You wear a dummy version on your index finger day and night, then they send you out a real one with the tracking smarts.

Mellow spout

Aside from taking it off to charge, the titanium ring is water-resistant down to 100 metres, which means it's one that you can keep on in the shower and when you're going for a dip.

High'll make it clear

The optical sensors are capable of monitoring body temperature, to help offer insight into what happens inside when illness hits or you're dealing with a stressful moment in your day.



TRACKERS

We like the chocolate chip ones best, how about you? Oh, wait...

Oura Ring 3

R4 850 (import) / ouraring.com

The age of the fitness tracker may have been dominated by bands so far, but there's a new generation of tracker in town... and it's shrinking those same features into something you can wear on a finger.

The Oura Ring has been spotted on the digits of royalty and Premier League footballers, and its third iteration is able to tell you more about how you might be feeling – and can even spot when you're getting unwell.

SPARKY'S DREAMS

Oura will count your steps and keep tabs on your heart rate, but it'll also deliver data-rich sleep tracking with meditations and stories to help you drift off. It'll keep a close eye on your daily activity and automatically recognise exercise to match it up with your recovery needs.

It wants to be a general health tracker too, monitoring body temperature and breathing rate, checking trends to make sure you're training and resting on the right days. From the app, you can get a sense of what's good and bad for you.

Oura is rolling out new features over time as well, including the ability to track heart rate during exercise, a period prediction mode powered by body temperature tracking, and blood oxygen monitoring to offer richer sleep insights.

That's all hidden away in a discreet ring made from lightweight titanium that you can wear in the water, doesn't need to be charged every day and looks like a normal bit of bling.

If you're after a recovery and fitness tracker with an elegant form factor, the Oura is the one you want on your finger.



Whoop 4.0

Stare at the wrists of most elite athletes and you might well see Whoop's knitted band. This screen-less device cares about your sleep and recovery time, and combines that data with Strain scores to make sure you're training at the right time. Whoop's health features also includes blood oxygen tracking. **from R400/m / whoop.com**



Fitbit Luxe

The Luxe was Fitbit's first colour-screened fitness tracker, which you can make look less tracker-like by pairing it up with a stainless steel link bracelet (included on the SE model). Beneath that slender form factor lie sensors to track your heart rate and night-time blood oxygen. **R3 000 / fitbit.com**



Garmin Vivosmart 5

After a bit of a tracker hiatus, Garmin returns with the Vivosmart 5, flexing a bigger touchscreen display than its predecessor. There's room for sensors to keep tabs on heart rate, stress, steps and sleep, and it can use your phone's GPS to track outdoor workout time. That's topped off with one-week battery life. **R2 600 / takealot.com**



Huawei Band 6

Mixing smartwatch and tracker looks, the Band 6 slaps on a nice big AMOLED colour screen and matches it up with an exercise-friendly strap. There are almost 100 sports modes covered and it'll also track your stress to keep you calm before you face up to another butt-kicking session in the gym. **R1 300 / geewiz.co.za**

NOW ADD THESE...



CAMELBAK EDDY+

Smarter than your average water bottle, the Eddy+ uses a LifeStraw to remove parasites and bacteria from drinking spots. **R300 / driftersshop.co.za**



ULTIMATE EARS WONDERBOOM 2

The waterproof Wonderboom 2 is a dinky speaker with big sound for your HIIT workouts. **R1 600 / takealot.com**



FURO STUDIOS 01 SERIES PRIME

The GOAT of yoga mats: supportive natural rubber and a non-slip layer will help you hold firm. **R2 500 (import) / furostudios.com**

BUYING ADVICE

GET UP

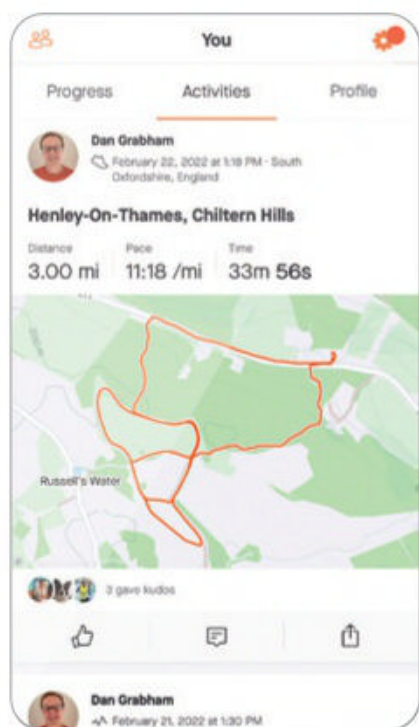
A fitness tracker that includes an altimeter sensor will make sure you can track steps you've climbed, and calorie-burning elevated time is accounted for.

GET WET

Check that a fitness band has a water-resistance rating good enough to mean you won't have to think about taking it off when you jump in the shower or pool.

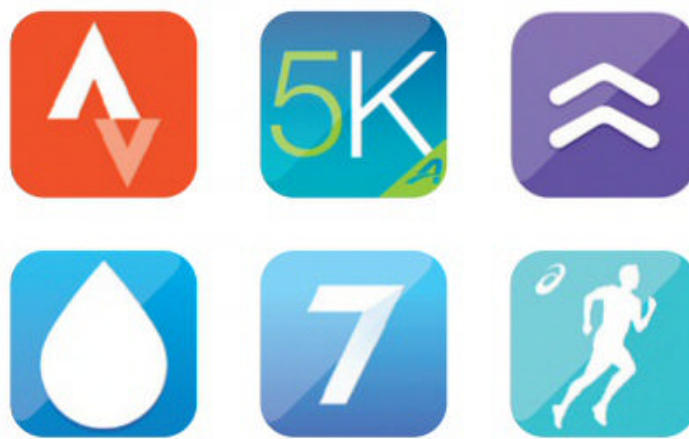
GET GOING

Grab a tracker that can stay alive for at least a week while more power-hungry features like continuous heart-rate monitoring or richer sleep tracking are in use.



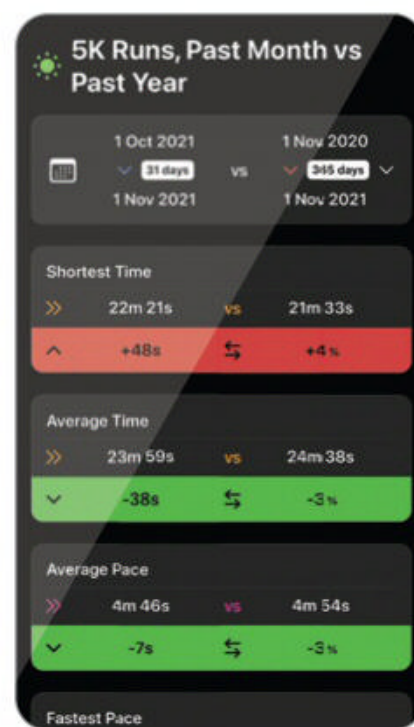
● Strava

If the early winter sun gets you looking for your Lycra, it's time to download Strava, which seems to be morphing more into a social network for exercise. Track your biking/running trails with GPS, race routes set by others and tap into all sorts of data. It'll work with a host of wearables and adding a heart-rate monitor really pumps things up. It will nag you to upgrade to the R80/m sub, though. **Free (IAP) / iOS, Android**



NOW APP THESE...

Even if you have a tracking app on your phone, these will take your training to the next level



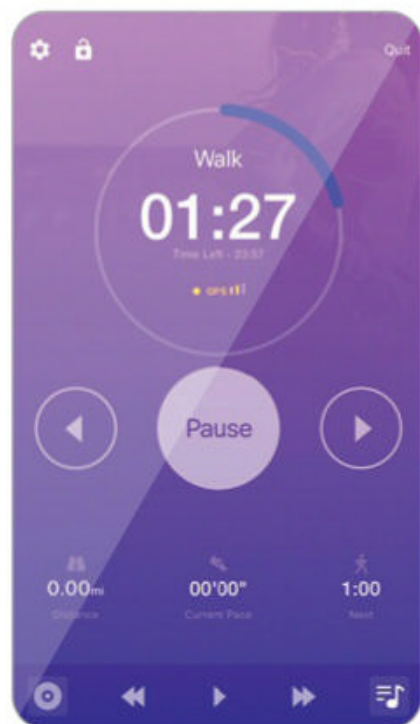
● Fit500

Your iPhone's Health app holds a lot of fitness data, but digging through menus to get at what you want can be a chore. Fit500 is designed to provide a better version of this data by surfacing the stats you care about. You can attach various graphs and figures to a personalised dashboard and this syncs over iCloud, so if you drop your iPhone in the river you won't lose your dashboard data. **Free (IAP) / iOS**



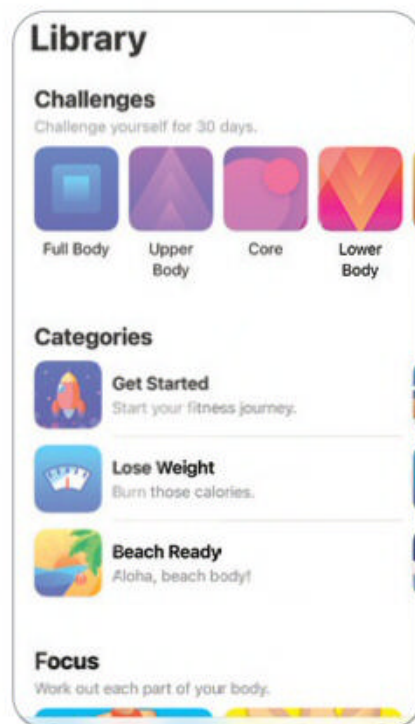
● WaterMinder

Science is divided on how much liquid you should take in daily and how often. But one thing's for sure: too many of us don't drink enough, and thereby become dehydrated. WaterMinder lets you define goals, tracks your progress, and can give reminders to have a slurp. That doesn't have to be for exercise: you can track your intake while slumped at your desk being a typing vegetable. **Free (IAP) / Android • R90 / iOS**



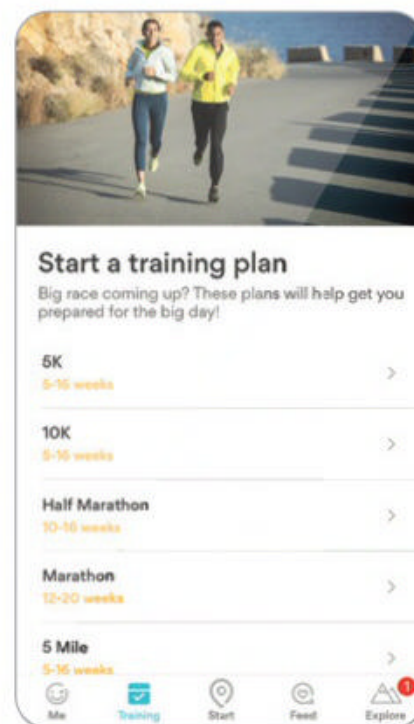
● Couch to 5K

Out of puff when you run up the stairs? Then it's time to get yourself fit. Couch-to-5K apps are plentiful and aim to get you running 5km in a smallish number of weeks. If you have an Apple Watch, there's a version specifically for your wristwear that means there's no need to lug a phone around while huffing your way up the high street. Well, less weight means more speed. **R86 / Android • R90 / iOS**



● Seven

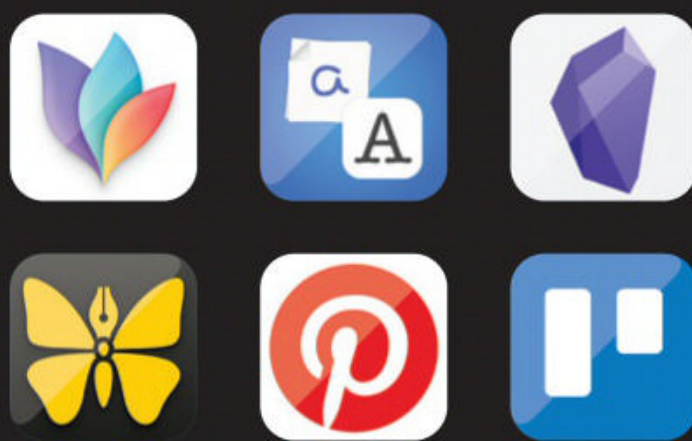
Leave the excuses on the bedroom floor: Seven squeezes your daily dose of sweating into just 420 seconds (yep, that's where the name comes from) and is meant to give you maximum benefit in the shortest possible time. No weights are involved and a session a day for seven months is the aim, with an array of awards in case the rippling abs in the mirror aren't incentive enough. **Free (IAP) / iOS, Android**



● Runkeeper

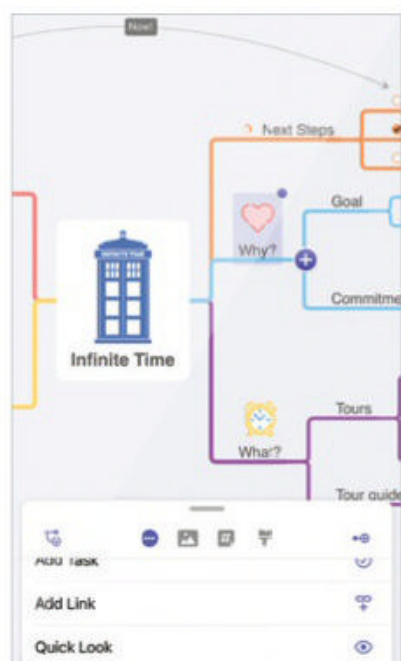
A long-time favourite of healthy folks, Runkeeper is now owned by Asics. As you'd expect, it uses GPS to build a map of your runs (the clue's in the name there) and enables you to set manageable goals that work for you as part of a training plan. Runkeeper is a really great option for recording and sharing routes of your Starbucks-dodging runs and tracking your pace over time. **Free (IAP) / iOS, Android**

Mini meme



THOUGHT YOURSELF OUT

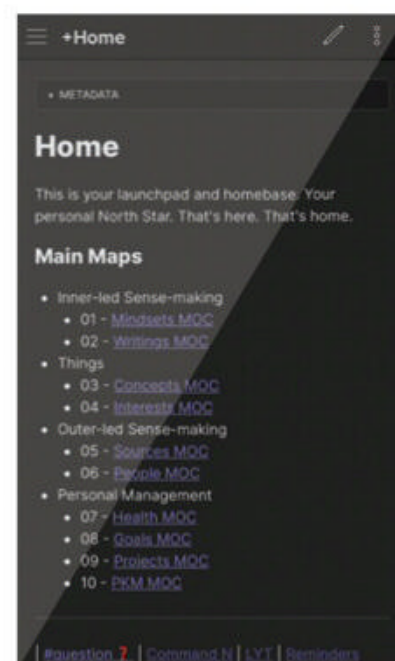
Sometimes there's just too much stuff rattling around inside your head – so use these apps to save your brain by organising and linking ideas and plans



● MindNode

Mind maps (or spider diagrams) are great for turning jumbled thoughts into a clear picture. MindNode has robust layout features but, more importantly, speeds things along: you start with a bullet-point outline and then, with a single tap, 'explode' it into a full mind map. Alas, it's iOS only, but MiMind is a suitable option if you're armed with an Android blower and fancy a spot of mental mapping.

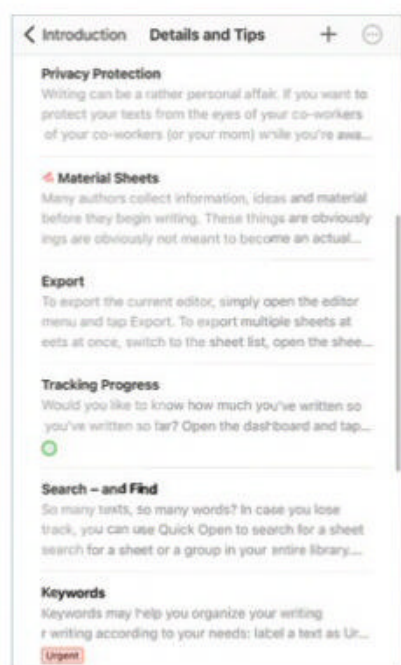
Free / iOS



● Obsidian

If you're keen on smashing out text-based notes but still want to make connections between them, try Obsidian. The app's core is a plain-text Markdown editor, where you can crosslink individual items. This turns your efforts into something resembling a personalised mobile wiki. A graph view gives you a more visual overview of your links, and plug-ins ramp up the app's broader scope.

Free / Android, iOS



● Ulysses

This app's also based around text and Markdown, but has a different approach from Obsidian. The idea is that Ulysses becomes a repository for all your text: you dump ideas into it, and later make sense of them. Through keywords, filters and folders, you can organise everything, whether you want to group items by subject or gradually build notes into a novel.

Free (IAP) / iOS



● Pen to Print

If your process for getting ideas down is resolutely analogue, you could get one of those fancy notepads that convert your scrawl into editable text on the fly. But if you prefer actual notepads, you need a scanner app. Adobe Scan is our usual go-to for typed documents; but for written notes, Pen to Print will turn your jottings into digital text – as long your handwriting is reasonably legible.

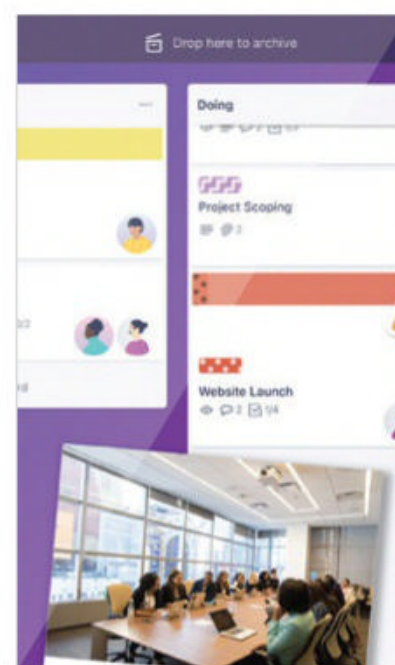
Free (IAP) / Android, iOS



● Pinterest

There have been interesting indie apps over the years to help you sort ideas based around images and links rather than words (Magpie being a one-time *Stuff* fave). But Pinterest was always the monster in the room, and it's stomped the competition into oblivion. Fortunately, it's a solid app for capturing inspiration, organising thoughts across multiple boards and collaborating with friends.

Free / Android, iOS



● Trello

For business types, Trello is a must-have for quickly getting down ideas – and for tracking their progress. The app's flexibility helps – it's down to you to define dates, labels and other fields applied to cards. Trello's friendly interface, which lets you quickly drag and drop items between user-defined lists, also makes it worth investigating for individuals working on complex projects.

Free / Android, iOS



INSTANT UPGRADES

APPLE MACBOOK PRO



**FIRST ADD
THESE...**



ONE KENSINGTON STUDIOCADDY

Finished being a super-hip Apple genius for the day? Close up your laptop and rest it in the fancy-looking StudioCaddy for a tidy and stylish workspace. It stows and charges your MacBook and iPad via USB-A and USB-C ports, and wirelessly charges up a phone and earbuds at the same time. Multi-function mastery. R3 375 / takealot.com

TWO MOMENT TRAVELWEAR BACKPACK (21L)

Creatives on the move don't need a beastly bag, even for the 16in MacBook Pro. Get the 21-litre Moment with camera insert and this backpack serves as a secure DSLR case and laptop protector with loads of pouches for your other techy bits. Available in olive, clay and black, it's as stylish as it is practical. R4 200 / wantitall.co.za

THREE HUAWEI MATEVIEW

If you don't want to fork out a fortune for an Apple Display, the MateView's 4K+ 28.2in monitor makes for a stunning alternative. Smart and sleek, this 10-bit screen features 98% DCI-P3 coverage, supports wireless casting and adds two USB ports to your MacBook. [R12 000 \(import\) / huawei.com](http://R12 000 (import) / huawei.com)



NOW TRY THIS...



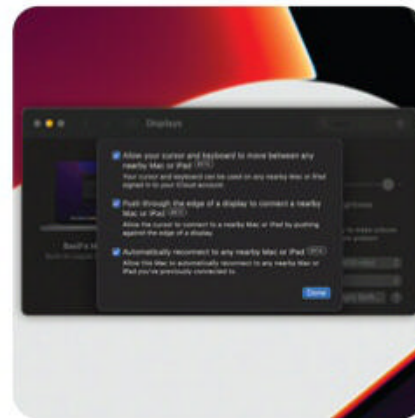
1 READ PICTURES

Preview, the image viewer in macOS, has an in-built optical character recognition tool. This means it can look at an image, spot text within it, then make it selectable. All you need to do is highlight the text on an image with your mouse pointer, then you can copy it into a message or document of your choice. Control-click the highlighted text and you can even translate it into any one of 11 languages.



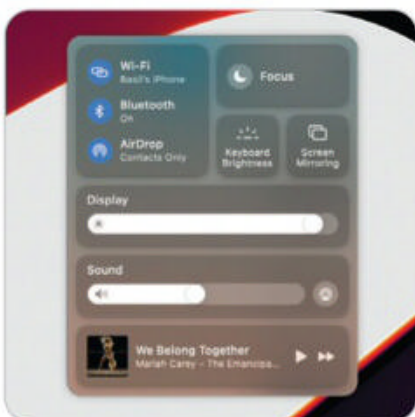
2 APP YOUR GAME

MacBooks powered by Apple's M1 chips can run iPhone and iPad apps. These display as floating windows that look like native apps. You have two ways to access them via the App Store: either click your profile photo and select iPhone & iPad Apps to see all the apps associated with your account; or search for an app and then select iPhone & iPad Apps to see the relevant results.



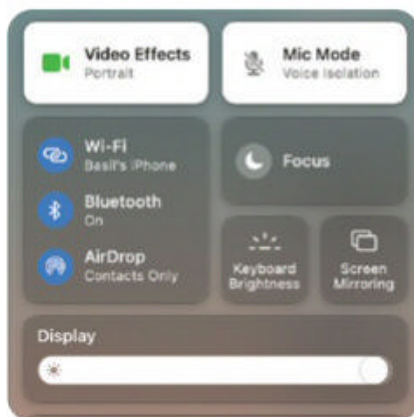
3 INTEGRATE AN iPad

Newer iPads and MacBooks can take advantage of Apple's Universal Control for a shared mouse and keyboard. To turn it on, open System Preferences on your MacBook and go to Displays > Universal Control, then select 'Allow your cursor and keyboard to move between any nearby Mac or iPad'. In your iPad's settings, select General, then AirPlay & Handoff, and turn on Cursor and Keyboard.



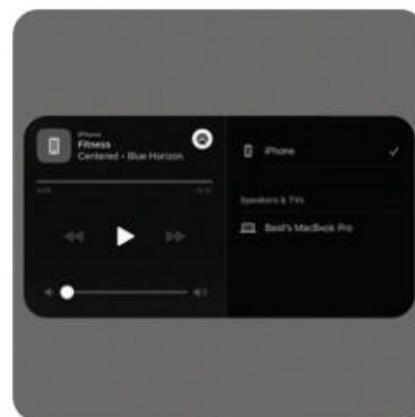
4 FIND YOUR FOCUS

Apple's made it easier than ever to block distracting digital noise with Focus. It lives in the Control Centre (the two horizontal bars in the upper right corner of the screen); with a tap, it activates Do Not Disturb across all your iCloud devices – Apple Watch, iPad, iPhone, and of course the MacBook itself. For granular control over what's blocked, click on Notifications & Focus in System Preferences.



5 GO FACE TO FACE

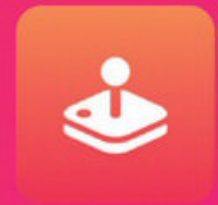
FaceTime finally works for Android and Windows devices... well, sort of. It still requires a MacBook, iPad or iPhone to set up the meeting, but once that's done you can share a link with any platform – as long as your recipient has access to a web browser, they can dial in. With FaceTime open, your MacBook's Control Centre also gives quick access to video backgrounds and sound effects.



6 AIRPLAY AWAY

The new MacBook Pros have decent speakers and killer screens. Why squint at your tiny iPhone when watching a clip or working out with Fitness+ when you can easily cast it all to your laptop with AirPlay? Just make sure Wi-Fi is on across both devices, open your iPhone's Control Centre and tap the AirPlay icon; the phone's screen will dim as your MacBook takes centre stage.

THEN GET THESE...



APPLE ARCADE

With time-eaters such as *Alto's Adventure* and *Mini Motorway* included, Apple Arcade can help dispel boredom through access to over 200 games. **R100/m**



MINDNODE

If you're a visual thinker who brainstorms with mind maps, our note-taking pick for macOS is MindNode. It dials back clutter and makes organising your brain easy. **from Free**



MICROSOFT TO DO

The MacBook's own Reminders app is great if your whole digital life is Apple-based. But if you work across Android, Windows and more, To Do is a free and effective taskmaster. **Free**

BETA YOURSELF TECH SECURITY

Having a phone stolen is bad, but having what's on it stolen is worse; so **Stuff** digs into the best ways to lock down data and devices to protect yourself from nefarious types

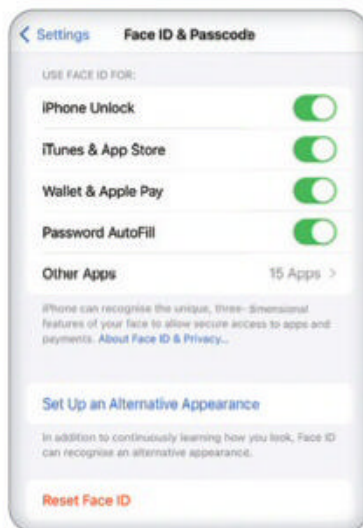
THE BASICS

■ Use better passwords

Make device passcode locks alphanumeric. Use a password manager and, when setting any new passwords, avoid easily identifiable strings of characters or letters. Never use the same passwords (or parts of passwords) across multiple apps and services. Use random strings for account recovery challenges, not real answers that a third party could figure out.

■ Thwart phishing

You might laugh at terrible phishing emails from 'Apple iCloud', but many of these fakes are now getting more sophisticated, directly cloning the visual style of big brands. Be wary of tapping on links asking you to sign in from email – instead, manually



log into accounts the usual way and check whether things are OK from there.

■ Test biometrics

You want the barrier that stops others getting at your stuff to be secure but frictionless for you. On that basis, consider biometric unlocking for your devices, using fingerprint or facial scanning. But research the

best option for the kit you own: facial scanning remains spotty on some Android devices.

■ Secure sensitive data

In the same way you wouldn't put your PIN and credit-card number on a sticky note for all to see, make sensitive data on your phone harder to access. Place relevant content behind passwords or biometric locks. Some apps, such as Apple's Notes, allow you to do this on a per-item basis.

■ Consider a VPN

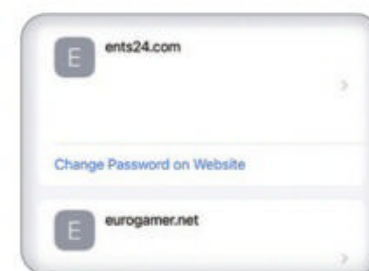
A virtual private network encrypts your data and hides your IP address. On public Wi-Fi, using a VPN will shield your activity... but VPNs aren't created equally. First research whether a VPN's creator is trustworthy with your data. And be mindful that VPNs won't protect you from phishing and other issues.

Screen timeout

- ☐ 15 seconds
- ☐ 30 seconds
- ☒ 1 minute
- ☐ 2 minutes

Lock'n'roll

There's no point securing your blower with fancy biometrics if you always leave the screen on. So set it to automatically lock after a short amount of time.



CHECK PASSWORDS

■ Go online

Enter your email address or mobile number at haveibeenpwned.com and you'll see whether it's been in a data breach. If so, changing related passwords would be a very good idea.

■ Perform a local audit

Android and iOS can also help. Their respective Settings apps include password checkups with security recommendations. These flag compromised and weak passwords, and those you've reused across multiple accounts. Change them all as soon as you can.



ESSENTIAL APPS

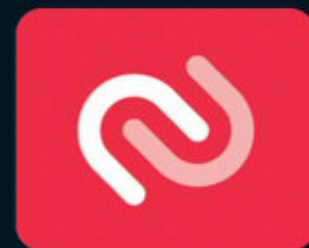


1PASSWORD

All modern operating systems include integrated password managers, so why pay for 1Password? Aside from making it easy to browse and edit logins, it's cross-platform, and you can stash details beyond just passwords.

R73/m /

1password.com



TWILIO AUTHY

Google's Authenticator app is fine for two-factor auth, but Authy is way better. It can sync 2FA tokens between devices, encrypt backups in the cloud, and secure your tokens behind biometric scans, thereby adding another layer of protection.

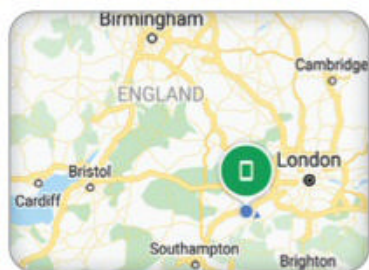
Free / **authy.com**



NORDVPN

Anyone who says VPNs are a panacea for device security when you're out and about is lying. But for shielding your activity or true location, NordVPN is a safe bet that only holds minimal customer data.

from R50/m / **nordvpn.com**



MONITOR DEVICES

■ Track your kit

Set up Find My on an Apple device (under your Apple ID) to track your devices in the Find My app or on icloud.com. On Android? Find My Device does much the same, and has its own online counterpart: google.com/android/find

■ Find a lost device

Select a lost device in the apps mentioned above and you can have it play a noise. If it turns out it's not nearby/down the back of the sofa, secure the device and have it display a lock-screen message – or use remote wipe if you know retrieval isn't possible.



DOUBLE UP WITH 2FA

■ Protect apps

Many apps and services offer two-factor authentication, which asks you to enter a one-time code rather than just a password. Activate this whenever possible and use an authenticator app to provide you with 2FA codes.

■ Don't use SMS

If possible, avoid using SMS messages for 2FA. It's possible for hackers to redirect mobile numbers using a SIM swap, so they wouldn't need your phone to get at codes.

■ Secure your accounts

Beyond individual apps, Apple and Google offer two-factor account authentication (Google calls this 2-Step Verification). It's worth setting this up to make it harder for a third party to brute-force their way into your iCloud or Google account.



DON'T BE PERMISSIVE

■ Peruse and prune

Browse the categories in the privacy section of your device's Settings app. If any apps have access to things they shouldn't have, revoke it. Always err on the side of caution when allowing access to personal data.

■ Bash the dash

In your Android's Settings, tap 'Privacy dashboard' and you'll see recent permissions. By default, the pane focuses on location, camera and mic, but you can expand that to see what else has been recently used – handy for trying out new apps.



Nintendo Switch Sports

Wii Sports is back for a new generation and new hardware — and whacking an invisible tennis ball in your living room is as enjoyable as ever, especially if others are joining in

The year is 2006. Man United are still good, James Blunt is a British sensation, and Nintendo is launching a new games console that will go on to — at least temporarily — revolutionise the industry.

The Wii was an enormous success for Ninty, and *Wii Sports* was the perfect showcase for its innovative motion controls. Suddenly, everyone from your uncoordinated adolescent cousin to your grandma was playing

tennis in the living room. And now, Nintendo is bringing the *Sports* series to its latest machine.

Six disciplines are included in the imaginatively named *Nintendo Switch Sports* at launch (golf will come later this year), and all are played while holding either one or both of the Switch's detachable Joy-Con controllers.

If you played *Wii Sports* back in the day then tennis and bowling will feel familiar, but the Joy-Cons offer more precise motion controls than the Wiimote, so nailing that

perfect strike or adding topspin to your backhand is even more satisfying now.

Tennis is a classic, but we might even prefer badminton. You're able to play a wider variety of shots here, and this can lead to some seriously tense rallies.

Chambara, a combat sport that has you wielding swords on a small platform, is also a lot of fun. It's perhaps the most involved game of all, with as much emphasis on blocking attacks as launching your own.

We're less impressed by volleyball, which is a bit formulaic; and that just leaves football, which we've covered in detail opposite.

Like its noughties predecessor, *Nintendo Switch Sports* is simply a fantastic local multiplayer game. We weren't able to test the online mode ahead of launch, but that's only likely to add longevity to the overall package.

In an era that has largely moved on from motion controls, it really is a joy to be endangering television screens once again.

STUFF SAYS This could prove to be another motion-controlled multiplayer classic ★★★★★



Switch / nintendo.co.za

Switch Sports' rendition of badminton is actually pretty goodminton.

Bowling is also included, but sadly there's no word yet on unicycle jousting.



The hands of God

The sixth game in the initial lineup is football – played with your hands, obviously. In either one-on-one or four-on-four matches, you move your players around the pitch flicking your wrists forward, left or right to leather an oversized ball.

You can't tackle but you can, hilariously, leap into the air for a diving header at any moment. You can even call for the ball, but that's unlikely to make much difference playing with greedy friends.

This game has real *Rocket League* vibes, but it's a slower and far less complex arcade spin on football. Scoring from range crucially feels great; and while we still haven't quite managed a Shearer-esque headed finish, we know it'll look even better when it finally happens.

There's a penalty shootout mode that uses a leg strap (if you own *Ring Fit Adventure* you already have one), and has you actually kicking a virtual ball towards a goal that gets smaller each time you score. It's simplistic and doesn't feel very accurate, but maybe that's just bitterness talking.

The option to play using a leg strap in team games will be added in a future update, and we can only imagine the chaos that will bring.

PS5, PS4, XSX, XB1, Switch,
PC / starwars.com

Lego Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga

The Force is strong with this enormous celebration of one of the most beloved film franchises of all, packed with in-jokes and Easter eggs

The wait for *Lego Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga* has felt nearly as long as the lifespan of the legendary film series it lovingly parodies, but it's finally here. Spanning all nine mainline *Star Wars* films – or all three trilogies if you like – *The Skywalker Saga* is the biggest Lego game ever and arguably the ultimate interactive love letter to George Lucas's big-screen baby.

A remake of the whole series from the ground up in sparkling 4K HDR, its only completely new additions are the second two films from the sequel trilogy, but a few tweaks definitely enhance the experience. The game is now played from an over-the-shoulder third-person perspective, with a simple cover system, proper aiming and a combo meter for melee attacks. Yes, you can still button-mash your way through the whole thing and rarely be punished for it, but we appreciate the added meat.

As you make your way through the levels you'll be fighting various

baddies on foot and in the air, solving simple puzzles and, of course, smashing everything in sight to collect Lego pieces to spend on upgrades and gear. Before each one you'll visit open-world hubs that are so stuffed with side-quests and hidden collectibles that it feels like *Lego Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga* is effectively two games in one. You'll struggle to find any title this year that gives you more bang for your hard-earned bucks.

Missions are a bit of a mixed bag, though. We always enjoyed any sequence that let us play as a Jedi character, and the boss battles are mostly entertaining too, but sometimes things felt disappointingly padded.

A lot of *The Skywalker Saga* is retreading old ground in more ways than one, but its marriage of simple, accessible gameplay, moreish collecting and trademark slapstick humour never gets old. Besides, you can never surprise a Stormtrooper bathing in a hot tub too many times.



Captain Kirk wields his lightsword in this scene from *The Jedi Strikes Back*.



K9 takes on the Daleks in this scene from *Star Wars: The Next Generation*.

STUFF SAYS The best Lego game yet and a fine tribute to the *Star Wars* world ★★★★★

Switch, PS4, Xbox One, PC via Steam and GOG, Google Stadia / hotdremake.com

The House Of The Dead: Remake

It's a zombie blast from the past — but does this arcade classic still have the power to put the willies up us a quarter of a century on?

In this level you have to help two British tourists steal beer from a bar in Benidorm.

In this level you have to teach a giant zombie spider how to dance the Viennese waltz.

Some of the greatest, most memorable games of yesteryear were not played on a console but in the arcade. One of the very best examples is Sega's *The House Of The Dead*, a first-person shooter that gave you a plastic light-gun controller to blast away at a gruesome cast of ghouls. But can this Switch remake bring back those halcyon days with a Joy-Con instead?

Much of the 1996 original has been faithfully recreated here, including the *Se7en*-inspired typography for the chapter headings, while the visuals are technically better than arcade-perfect, with all-new character models based on the classic enemy designs. Better yet, they're gushing with proper claret, rather than the censored green blood of the original.

You use the Joy-Con's built-in gyro or control stick for aiming. In either case you're still dealing with a visible crosshair, which doesn't feel as natural as holding a gun and looking down the sights, even

though it is arguably more accurate — at least when the gyro is behaving itself. The cursor always finds a way to drift off to the side, meaning you have to press a button to recentre it every few seconds.

The House Of The Dead was and remains a challenging game, but the remake is a bit more generous with helping you survive its ordeal. For a start your lives are measured in half-units now, while a new lives-for-points system grants you some more credits at the expense of your final score.

Even with these additions, there's no getting around the fact that it's still easy to see pretty much everything in just a few runs in one evening. If you're saving it for some couch co-op, there's still a lot of fun to be had in revisiting a game that looks better than its arcade predecessor; but the new control scheme is a poor substitute for the good old days of pointing a light-gun at a CRT screen.

STUFF SAYS A fine-looking remake but iffy controls fail to recapture the glory days ★★☆☆☆

GADGET DOCTOR



ALWAYS ON CALL

facebook.com/stuffsa • @StuffSA
stuff@stuff.co.za

MAIL OF THE MONTH

Q ABOUT THOSE IMPORTS

I love your magazine and often purchase it. It's always great to see the latest technologies around the world, however what I dislike immensely is you encouraging the import of products that are not available in yet in South Africa, as the South African distributors do not hold the warranties for. Dyson in SA will not honour the warranty on the Dyson V15 bought on that website. Furthermore the Instant pot also available for import is 120v, also local distributor will not hold warranties.

Janice

A Thank you for your genuinely helpful email, Janice. You make valid points. *Stuff* readers are tech enthusiasts, and we need to cover the best and latest tech even before it's available in SA. But you're right, we should alert them to the risks of importing products not supported here. Beyond marking import-only products as such, we can point out the risks in every issue of the mag – we'll add that to the note on pricing that appears upfront, on the editor's page. And we've highlighted this matter in this issue's editor's column.

Speak your brains to *Stuff* and you could win!
This letter wins a Nokia T20 tablet worth R4 000.

Q THE GOOD OLD DAYS

I have a question about one of my absolute favourite pieces of tech ever – the PlayStation 2. What is the best option for upscaling in the South African market? I have already upgraded the basic composite cables to component but I want to take the next step up, however, trying to find any upscalers in SA has been a real struggle. I was looking at the RetroTink, OSSC and Framemeister devices but as far as I can tell there's no way of getting them here that is financially feasible. Any suggestions or alternatives would be greatly appreciated.

Tate

A We're afraid the South African market isn't going to be of any great help on this one. We always end up paying more for technology here. More so when it's as niche as upscaling your old, trusty PS2. If you're dead set on reliving the glory days, your only real options are to fork out for a digitiser from Amazon or try out PCSX2. It's a PS2 emulator that runs on your PC and it should support a good range of controllers. Another option is to try the PlayStation Plus Premium tier that lets you stream older titles, but you'll likely need a VPN and it might not have the games you're looking for.

Q OLD FAITHFUL

I'm Daniel and I am 14 years old and live in Cape Town. I just want to say that your magazine is awesome and have been reading for four years. I think a job at *Stuff* would be cool because you guys get to try out awesome gadgets, cars etc. I wanted to ask you if you would know where to get a new battery for my computer. It is a Dell Inspiron N5110 with 8GB of RAM and an Intel 8th Gen Core i3 processor. It is kinda old, probably from when people watched black and white TV and hunted dinosaurs. Where can I find a battery because at the moment it has to be plugged in all the time.

Daniel

A Hi Daniel. Thanks for being a keen *Stuff* reader – and yes, a job at *Stuff* is pretty cool. Your Inspiron N5110 must be seven or eight years old and has served you well. Try Dell tech support (0800 016 7000). They couldn't give us a price without your laptop's serial number, but you could also try computech-solutions.co.za. We haven't used them so can't recommend them, but they have the right battery at R615.

Q GET YOUR TVS WHILE THEY'RE HOT

I want a new, 65in TV so I go to the font of all tech knowledge and buy issue 117 of *Stuff*. Your number 1 pick, the Samsung 65QN90A, is exactly what I want and the price "from

R20 000" is also ideal. What isn't ideal is that I can't find a price close to that from any retailer and Samsung online sell it for R45 000. Agreed you state 'from' R20 000 but that would be disingenuous at best unless you were referring to a smaller model – the 55QN90A perhaps? Disappointed that I won't be buying the bargain that you led me to believe, but it still sounds worthy of investment at double the price.

David

A Unfortunately that 'from' indeed referred to the smaller 50in model of the same range. Our apologies, David. If there was any way to get a 65in Samsung QLED TV for R20 000 it would be all over the front cover. If you haven't already pulled the trigger, you'll be happy to note that the 65in model has – at the time of writing – dropped to R40 000. If you don't manage to get it at that price then Black Friday isn't too far away.



WRITE TO US AND WIN

WIN

Next month's mail of the month wins a brand-new Nokia T20 tablet **worth R4 000!**



Stuff

TOP TEN

OF EVERYTHING

This gadget has leapt straight outta testing and into our rankings.

NEW

**HOT
BUY**

**BARGAIN
BUY**

UPDATE

Time changes everything, including *Stuff* Top Ten placings.

Searing with techy genius, a product that's set our hearts aflame.

A solid gold bargain. Worth owning, regardless of cashflow.



WHERE
TO GET
THEM

Smartphones	90
Budget Smartphones	91
Tablets & streamers	92
TVs	93
Laptops	94
Smartwatches & fitness trackers	95
Budget buys	96

VR headsets & games	97
Drones, action cams & compact cameras	98
System cameras	99
Headphones	100
Wireless/smart speakers	101
Consoles	102
Games	103

1

**HOT
BUY**

NEW

TIPS & TRICKS

- Long tap on your home screen and select Widgets. Select Smart Widgets and choose from the options. These are stackable and customisable.
- Customise your colour palette. Long tap on the home screen and select Wallpaper and Style. Tap on the colour palette and pick one that suits you.



Samsung Galaxy S22 Ultra

from R28 000 / samsung.com/za

The S22 Ultra improves on just about everything in the S21 Ultra. It's not intended to replace it, though – it's standing in for the Note series now. The dazzling 6.8in LPTO display, snappy Exynos 2200 chip, spiffy array of cameras and S Pen mean you're getting a lot of phone for your money. As well you should, because this one is not cheap. The only gripe we had was the 5,000mAh battery. It doesn't tend to last as long as you'd expect.

Stuff says ★★★★★

This is the most capable smartphone you can currently buy



● NOW ADD THIS

45W charging adapter

The S22 Ultra doesn't come with one in the box. This one's kinda speedy. Kinda. R700 / samsung.com/za

● Prices quoted are for handset only unless otherwise stated

2

UPDATE



Apple iPhone 13 Pro

from R23 000 / incredible.co.za

While the iPhone 13 Pro doesn't look dissimilar to 2020's offering, it comes with a bunch of tweaks that add up to something more significant. This is Apple's most accomplished handset of the new generation, with the A15 Bionic chip, 5G and a slick camera system.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Hits the spot for power, performance, camera, battery life and design

3

UPDATE



Apple iPhone 13 Pro Max

from R25 300 / incredible.co.za

There isn't a lot the iPhone 13 Pro Max can do that is missing from the 13 Pro. You'll find most of the same features, just turned up to 11. That includes the dimensions, the display, the battery, and the price. Although, that last metric could have dropped a bit since launch.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Just a little bit extra for all those Apple fans who like to go large

NEW

4



Samsung Galaxy S22+

★★★★★ from R22 000 / samsung.com/za

A tempting middle ground, but will you regret not going Ultra?

5



Xiaomi 11T Pro

★★★★★ R14 000 / mia.africa.com

Puts pricier phones on notice with its blisteringly rapid 17-minute charging.

NEW

6



Samsung Galaxy S22

★★★★★ from R19 000 / samsung.com/za

An S22 without the excess, but it's outshone by its brethren.

UPDATE

7



Huawei P40 Pro

★★★★★ R15 650 / connecteddevices.co.za

Look past the lack of Google apps, and this is a premium device with brilliant power under the hood.

8



Apple iPhone 12

★★★★★ from R15 500 (64GB) / incredible.co.za

Slipped down the charts but not from our hearts – 2020's best iPhone is still brilliant.

UPDATE

9



Apple iPhone 12 Mini

★★★★★ from R13 000 (64GB) / incredible.co.za

It's the iPhone 12 but much cuter. It's no less powerful but it's still adorable!

NEW

10



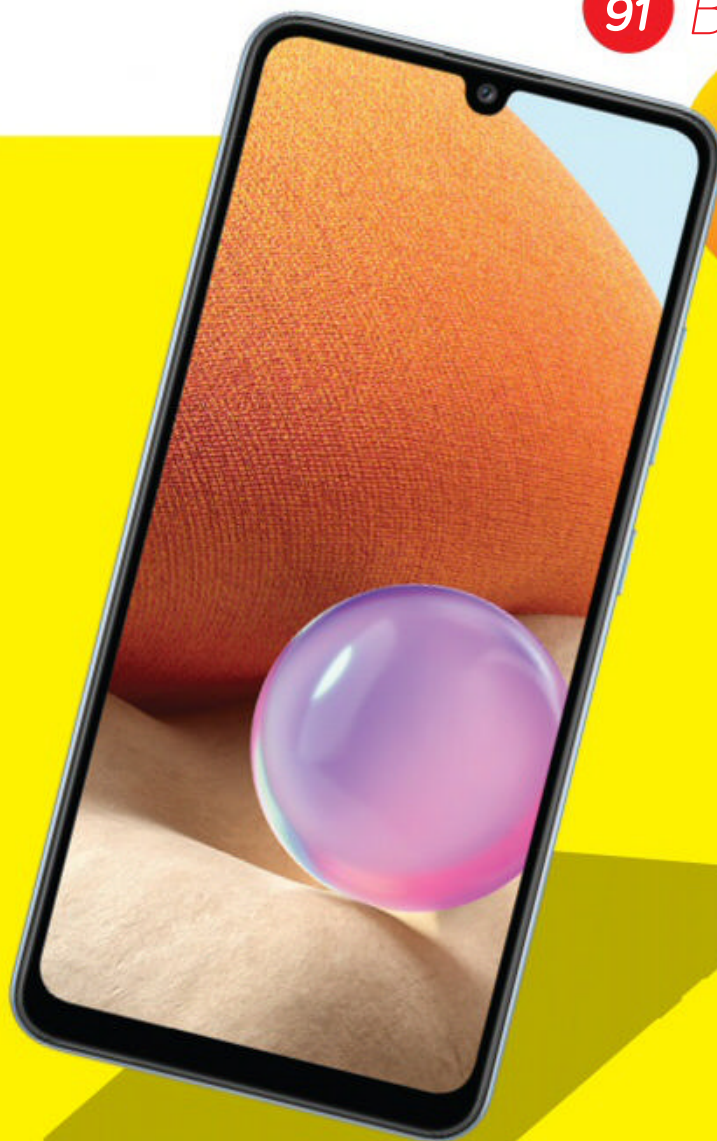
Samsung S21 FE

★★★★★ from R13 000 / samsung.com/za

A step below the flagship S22 series, but significantly kinder to your wallet.

TIPS & TRICKS

- You'll need to manually activate the 90Hz refresh rate... just watch that battery life afterwards.
- The Galaxy A32 should handle most games well but you'll notice the device becoming rather warm. That's normal.
- This budget phone comes with passable Night Mode photography thanks to Samsung's software smarts.



1

HOT BUY UPDATE

Samsung Galaxy A32

from R4 500 / samsung.com/za

Given how much you're paying, the Samsung Galaxy A32 is a snazzy little handheld. While it obviously cuts back on some of the more luxurious features belonging to its beefier siblings, we can't help but appreciate its 90Hz display, long-lived 5 000mAh battery and solid performance even when under duress. The camera even takes decent pictures above and beyond what is expected at this price point, making the A32 our top budget smartphone.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Excellent value for money, Samsung leads the budget smartphone race, for now



● NOW ADD THIS

SoundMagic ES18 Wired Earphones

The Galaxy A32 features an audio jack. Make good use of it with these excellent budget 'buds.

R150 / sound-magic.co.za

2



Samsung A52s 5G

R9 000 / samsung.com/za

Everybody wants the latest, most powerful smartphone on the planet. Almost nobody likes paying for it. The A52s brings all of the good bits from the A52 and adds 5G support. You also get an upgraded display, capable of 120Hz this time, a better processor and faster WiFi speeds.

Stuff says ★★★★★

This offers literally all you'll ever need from a smartphone

3

UPDATE



Xiaomi Note 10 Pro

R5 000 / mia.africa.com

There aren't many phones you'd describe as a bargain and mean it. The Note 10 Pro is one of those, with support for HDR, a 120Hz refresh rate for the display, and a ginormous 108MP camera on the back. The only downside? No 5G, but that's no disaster.

Stuff says ★★★★★

You can't quite have everything, but it turns out you can have most of it

UPDATE

4



Poco X3 Pro

★★★★★ R6 700 / connecteddevices.co.za

Poco's phone has a spectacular set of specs for not much money. The design is forgivable.

5



Oppo A15

★★★★★ R2 500 / incredible.co.za

The Oppo A15 packs in everything you need from a smartphone at an excellent price.

6



Apple iPhone SE (2020)

★★★★★ from R9 600 / incredible.co.za

Might not be worth it with an updated model on the horizon.

UPDATE

7



Poco M4 Pro

★★★★☆ R5 000 / takealot.com

If you're on a tight budget but still want features, the M4 Pro won't disappoint.

UPDATE

8



Vivo Y30

★★★★☆ R5 000 / edgars.co.za

An all-round decent phone let down by the clunky Funtouch operating system.

9



Xiaomi Redmi 9T

★★★★☆ R3 600 / mia.africa.com

The Redmi 9T gets you to your destination despite cutting corners along the way.

UPDATE

10



Samsung Galaxy A72

★★★★☆ R8 500 / everyshop.co.za

A powerful phone that's less value-orientated than it should be at this price.

1

HOT
BUY

UPDATE



Apple iPad Pro (2020)

from R13 000 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

The old iPad Pro was already our favourite tablet by miles, and the latest update only makes it more desirable. As before, it isn't cheap; but with its huge and super-slick 120Hz Liquid Retina screen, ludicrously speedy internals and double-lens camera (like the one in the iPhone 11), this is one working device to rule them all. Since Apple added cursor support to iPadOS, it's also the best tablet to replace your laptop – and a glimpse into the near future of computing.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Apple's mega-tablet evolves into an outstanding piece of kit and pulls even further ahead of the pack

1

HOT
BUY

UPDATE



Xiaomi Mi Box S

from R1 200 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

Buying a TV box in SA is a hit or miss, as most of them are mass-produced and run on iffy software. Your best bet is opting for a certified Android box, like the Xiaomi Mi Box S. It's the second of its kind, and can stream content in 4K from a variety of services on the market. Already have a smart TV? Just add the Mi Box S to up its streaming game. It's also got Chromecast built-in, with some Assistant chops to improve its desirability. The Play Store offers a variety of apps that should impress any content snob.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Ready to join the Mi too movement? This is by far the best Android box on the market in SA right now

UPDATE

2



Apple iPad Air (2020)

from R11 900 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

The iPad Air is still one of the best high-end tablets you can find. The addition of the excellent A14 chip makes this one of the fastest, most powerful tablets currently on the market.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Still the go-to all-purpose iPad for most folks

UPDATE

3



Samsung Galaxy Tab S7+

R14 700 / [connecteddevices.co.za](https://www.connecteddevices.co.za)

The Galaxy Tab S7+ is an excellent device for folks who want a fast, powerful tablet without being locked into Apple's environment. It also features one of the best displays we've ever seen on a tablet.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A worthy contender in the high-end tablet wars

UPDATE

4



Apple iPad (2021)

★★★★★ from R6 500 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

The standard iPad remains as good in 2022 as it has been every year before.

UPDATE

5



Surface Go 2

★★★★★ from R8 000 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

Just enough power to be a genuine iPad rival, and a surprisingly good way to play games.

2



Google Chromecast 3.0

R750 / [takealot.com](https://www.takealot.com)

The Chromecast is a cheaper option to smart up your TV, and it works seamlessly. Plug-in, play and cast from your mobile device without hassle. Pair it to a Google Nest and gain more control using Google Assistant.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Cast your dreams to the TV

UPDATE

3



Amazon Fire TV Stick 4K

from R1 100 / [connecteddevices.co.za](https://www.connecteddevices.co.za)

Amazon's latest streaming stick offers 4K plus a faster processor than its predecessor and comes with an Alexa Voice Remote. It doesn't have Showmax, but the selection of third-party apps is excellent.

Stuff says ★★★★★

This is the best stick you can buy

UPDATE

4



Apple TV 4K

★★★★☆ from R3 300 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

If you're in the Apple ecosystem, might as well cough up for this one. It works. Well.

UPDATE

5



Mediabox Maverick

★★★★☆ R1 300 / [takealot.com](https://www.takealot.com)

This box packs a punch, winning points for being so easy to install.

1

HOT
BUY

UPDATE



Samsung 65QN90A

from R40 000 / samsung.com/za

This is Samsung's single best 4K TV of 2021 (unless you opt for something even pricier), but the pictures justify the outlay. The Korean giant's implementation of the new Mini LED tech is, on this evidence, something to be reckoned with. It's difficult to imagine how any of the new sets that are incoming in 2022 could be better. Gaming performance, movies, streaming, basically anything you can think of looks brilliant on this set.

Stuff says ★★★★★

This Mini LED television is a fearsomely accomplished set – and the one to beat

TIPS & TRICKS

- Audio is great, but if you're looking for the best performance, add a soundbar like the one we've listed.
- It's almost as good as OLED. Almost. You'll notice a touch of bloom, but only in total darkness.
- Of the four HDMI inputs, there is only one that fully supports 2.1. Choose your console wisely.

● **NOW ADD THIS** Samsung Q-Series soundbars
Pairing your QLED with one of these is a stress-free way to get 3D object-based sound.
from R5 000 / samsung.com/za



2

UPDATE



LG OLED65G1

from R50 230 / lg.com/za

Just over R50k is a lot of money for a television, even one as slim and well-specified as this, especially when you take the humdrum audio into account – not to mention the absence of a stand. But the OLED specialists have made good on the 'Evo' promise by serving up pictures that exceed expectations...

Stuff says ★★★★★

Probably LG's best ever OLED... which is saying something

3

UPDATE



LG OLED55CX

from R25 000 / lg.com/za

There's not much to be mad at. It's a capable and watchable upscaler of less information-rich content (our go-to was The Office). But it's also fighting to make the very best of your current-gen gaming console, which is highly appreciated. Although it's been replaced by the C1, it still has a lot to offer.

Stuff says ★★★★★

LG knows what it's doing with OLED and the results here are impressive

4



LG OLED 65C9PVA

★★★★★ from R43 000 / takealot.com

Our previous champ has been dethroned, but it still has plenty of love to give.

UPDATE

5



Samsung UA55TU7000

★★★★★ from R9 000 / hificorp.co.za

Large and in charge sporting Samsung's keen eye for design and 4K, all at a very attractive price.

UPDATE

6



Samsung 75Q950TS

★★★★★ from R140 000 / expertstores.co.za

An amazing 8K TV but that price is... well, let's be honest, if you're not Jeff Bezos, it's too high.

7



Samsung The Frame 55in 4K

★★★★☆ R26 000 / incredible.co.za

A 4K TV that looks like it belongs in a gallery, even when it's turned off. Who says television isn't art?

8



Skyworth 50SUD9300F

★★★★☆ from R7 800 / makro.co.za

A refreshed version of the one below. Expect more of the same, but slightly better and cheaper.

UPDATE

9



Skyworth 55SUC9300

★★★★☆ from R7 500 / hificorp.co.za

Feeling a bit long in the tooth now that its replacement has arrived. Still a decent TV.

10



TCL P615 4K TV

★★★★☆ from R7 000 / takealot.com

TCL brings the smart 4K TV experience to the masses. It kinda succeeds with this one.

TIPS & TRICKS

Who needs a Touch Bar? You can log into your Mac with your iPhone's Touch ID using the MacID app.

The universal clipboard lets you copy text on your iPhone and paste it directly to your Mac.

1

HOT BUY

UPDATE

Apple MacBook Air

from R18 000 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

The early-2020 version was already the best MacBook Air ever – and this one brings a real step up in power. Apple's amazing M1 processor means that, for once, we aren't hankering after a Pro for video editing and graphics-heavy gaming. It's a pity about the rubbish webcam – a real annoyance in the age of video calling – but this is a stunning machine in every other respect, and the best all-round work laptop you can get for under twenty grand.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Our go-to MacBook just keeps getting even go-to-er



● NOW ADD THIS

Satechi Type-C USB 3 Combo Hub

Two ports not enough? This hub adds loads more and sits snugly against the MacBook Pro's side.

R800 / [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

2 UPDATE



Apple MacBook Pro 14in

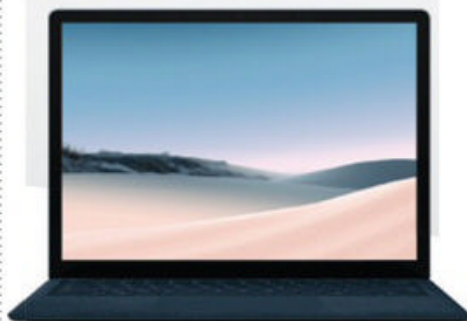
from R38 500 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

If you don't need this MacBook's power and ports, it's overkill. And if your software isn't yet optimised for Apple's incredible new M1Pro chip, it might not (yet) represent great value. But if you work in a field that can take advantage of its tech, you'll be thrilled. The return of the physical top row is a welcome addition for video editors, and battery life is fantastic too.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The Pro goes fully 'Pro' again – if you can afford it, you'll love it

3 UPDATE



Microsoft Surface Laptop 3

from R10 370 / [connecteddevices.co.za](https://www.connecteddevices.co.za)

The Surface Laptop 3 seems plain on paper – no second screen, no hybrid hinge, no fingerprint scanner – but Microsoft has put supreme attention to detail into every bit that matters. And if you can spare a few thousand more, see also the newer Surface Laptop 4. But you don't need the latest and greatest in order to experience business notebook perfection.

Stuff says ★★★★★

We couldn't be more pleased with our first Surface laptop

UPDATE

4



Apple MacBook Pro 13in

★★★★★ from R24 500 / [everyshop.co.za](https://www.everyshop.co.za)

Surpassed by the new M1Pro models, but the 'basic' M1 chip still kicks large amounts of...

UPDATE

5



Dell XPS 13 (2020)

★★★★★ R30 000 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

An update to the processor and battery continues the XPS 13's high standard.

UPDATE

6



Asus ROG Zephyrus G14

★★★★★ from R25 000 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

Gaming has never felt as good (or as metal) as this iron-clad warrior makes the experience.

UPDATE

7



Microsoft Surface Pro 7

★★★★★ from R14 000 / [incredible.co.za](https://www.incredible.co.za)

Microsoft's hybrid is a versatile, portable productivity machine that justifies its price.

UPDATE

8



MSI GE76 Raider

★★★★★ from R75 000 / [takealot.com](https://www.takealot.com)

It's a monster price, but there's also monstrous tech stashed inside this not-very-bulky frame.

UPDATE

9



MSI Summit E16 Flip

★★★★★ R38 000 / [computermania.co.za](https://www.computermania.co.za)

MSI's business machine does a little of everything and does it all well.

UPDATE

10



Asus Zenbook Duo 14

★★★★☆ from R32 350 / [asus.com/za](https://www.asus.com/za)

You're paying extra for a secondary screen but you're getting your money's worth.

1

HOT
BUY**TIPS & TRICKS**

- Never get lost with on-wrist access to Google Maps. You'll need your phone to lend a hand here, but it's awful fun.
- Subscribe to Spotify Premium and use the Watch 4 to download and play back tracks on the road without needing your phone on hand. Win!
- You can also yell at your watch, but only Bixby is listening. Still, the AI with the British name will begin workout tracking if you deem it necessary.

**Samsung Galaxy Watch 4 Classic**from R7 000 / samsung.com/za

This is the best Wear OS watch in years: a greatest hits of Samsung watch design and Google watch software. Samsung's done a serious number on the display. The 1000-nit circle features an ambient light sensor so you'll always see what's happening. You'd best opt for the larger 46mm version, though, because the smaller edition just isn't as battery-packed as we'd like. But that's a relatively minor problem here.

Stuff says ★★★★★**An instant Classic? Not quite, but it's not far off the mark either****● NOW ADD THIS****Galaxy Watch 4 Sport Band**

Give your Wear OS wonder some extra grip in the gym with the Sport Band. Available in four hues, one for each session in a week. from R600 / samsung.com/za

2

**Apple Watch Series 7**from R8 500 / istore.co.za

If you've got an Apple Watch Series 3 or even earlier, upgrading to this one will be like walking into a lighting shop on a dark evening: the display is bigger and clearer, and there are new input options too. As a wearable it can't be beaten simply because it does so much.

Stuff says ★★★★★**The mighty Apple Watch stays near the top of the wearable tree**

3

NEW

**Garmin Fenix 7**from R13 500 / capeunionmart.co.za

This is more watch than most people need. But if your budget stretches, the impressive mix of rugged durability, serious battery endurance, excellent navigation skills and smartwatch features make this the best all-round sports watch you can buy.

Stuff says ★★★★★**A great tool for adventurous fitness-building**

4

**Garmin Fenix 6S**★★★★★ R11 000 / garmin.com/za

Compact, good looking, and the range of sports tracking is off the charts.

5

**Fitbit Charge 5**★★★★★ R4 000 / fitbit.com

Fitbit's tracker offers extensive metrics, a colour OLED screen, and on-board ECG and EDA scanning.

UPDATE

6

**Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro**★★★★★ R3 500 / connecteddevices.co.za

Fast, stylish and suitable for any occasion, the Huawei Watch GT 2 Pro is built to fit any lifestyle.

UPDATE

7

**Garmin Forerunner 945**★★★★★ R10 000 / sportsmanswarehouse.co.za

Check temperature and altitude acclimation, make NFC payments, play music and more.

UPDATE

8

**Garmin Fenix 6**★★★★★ from R10 000 / takealot.com

The best fitness-orientated smartwatch, offering incredible levels of detail.

9

**Huawei Band 4e**★★★★★ R700 / huawei.com/za

It's the simplicity and value for money that's ranked the Huawei Band 4e so highly.

10

**Fitbit Luxe**★★★★☆ R3 000 / fitbit.co.za

This is what you get when you combine fashion and fitness features.

1

HOT
BUY

Razer Seiren Mini Microphone

R1 150 / evetech.co.za

It's rare that one encounters a microphone this small that works so well. The new Razer Seiren is the microphone for anyone who spends plenty of hours talking at the computer and doesn't want a clunky mic hanging over their mouth. It's also adorable, sitting comfortably out of the way while still putting out some impressively clear audio at a reasonable price.

Stuff says ★★★★★
One of the best sounding mics we've ever heard in this price range



● **NOW ADD THIS**
Hybrid FM02 - Pop Filter
Make sure those plosives aren't punching your listeners in the face with a proper pop filter.
R300 / takealot.com

2



Game and Watch

R1 000 / store.nintendo.co.za

While it may be simple, this stylish collectible needs to be on every fan's shelf. Just holding it is enough to whisk you back to the classic Nintendo Game and Watch of the 80s. Plus, it includes three *Legend of Zelda* classics, and a version of Game and Watch classic *Vermint*.

Stuff says ★★★★★
It's dangerous to go alone, take this handheld games console

3

UPDATE



Microsoft Xbox Wireless Headset

R2 300 / takealot.com

These black cans are unmistakably Xbox, with chunky earpads and plenty of padding. And the sound is impressive for the price, with a low-end response so impactful we had to turn down the bass in the Xbox's EQ app.

Stuff says ★★★★★
Yes, you really can bag a decent gaming headset for around R2 000

UPDATE

4



Raspberry Pi 400

★★★★★ R1 400 / za.rs-online.com

It's a whole PC but inside a keyboard into which you can plug in your screen and mouse.

UPDATE

5



Fujifilm Instax Mini 11

★★★★★ R1 210 / takealot.co.za

The latest Instax Mini is fun, compact, quirky and perfect for a day out with some friends.

6



Xiaomi Mi TV Stick

★★★★★ R850 / takealot.com

Turn any TV, monitor or projector into a smart TV and stream anywhere with this little TV stick.

7



Logitech G403 Hero

★★★★★ R900 / evetech.co.za

A fantastic mouse that looks and feels fantastic even if you're on a budget.

8



Kindle Fire 7in Version

★★★★★ from R1 400 / incredible.co.za

With 16GB of storage and an 8-hour battery, the Kindle Fire is perfect for reading, checking emails.

UPDATE

9



Blackstar AmPlug2 Fly

★★★★☆ from R1 320 / amazon.com

It doesn't have the most features, but you can rock out without rocking your neighbours out of bed.

10



Wahl Aqua Groom

★★★★☆ R1 500 / superbalist.com

Looking for a decent, affordable, compact beard trimmer? Look no further.

1

HOT
BUY

Oculus Quest 2

from R9 000 / 180by2.co.za

The Oculus Quest has finally been dethroned by its bigger and better sibling, the Quest 2. It's still the most efficient way to experience VR with the lack of cables and physically tethering to a PC making for an experience that's like no other. The increased resolution, sitting at 1832x1920, means 50% more pixels than the original Quest, 6GB of RAM and the 90hz refresh rate should hopefully alleviate any nausea. These upgrades mean the system runs faster and smoother than ever.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The Oculus Quest 2 is the best even if you have to jump through some Facebook hoops to use it

2



Valve Index

R30 050 (headset only) / pclinkshop.co.za
While not revolutionary, the Index carries enough subtle upgrades to put it atop the PC-based headset pack. Everything looks fabulous and the controllers deliver the most fluid feeling VR interactions to date.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The best of the performance-PC VR options

3



Oculus Rift S

R14 800 / zeekonline.co.za

An amazing swan song for VR's first gen, the Rift S is excellence made more appealing by its accessible price tag. Just because it's cheaper doesn't mean you shouldn't look out for dangling cables...

Stuff says ★★★★★

A fantastic headset despite those unruly cables

UPDATE

4



HTC Vive Pro

★★★★★ R21 610 (full kit) / techinn.com

This high-end headset offers the best VR experience by a long way. But at a price.

5

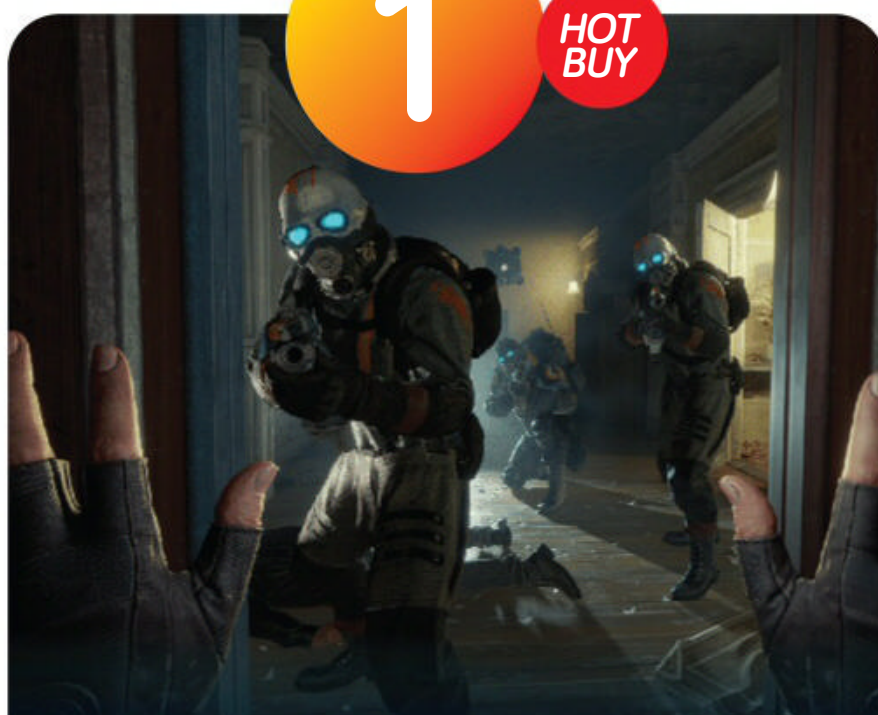


Oculus Go

★★★★★ from R6 900 / manicaa.com

Go-go dance with the Go on the go. It's cheaper than the Quest, and a standalone headset.

1

HOT
BUY

Half-Life: Alyx

from R330 / Oculus Quest/Rift, Vive, Valve Index

It's *Half-Life*, right? Developers Valve said they'd only go back to the legendary franchise when there was some new kind of technology they wanted to show off and boy howdy, did they succeed with *Alyx*. One of the most detailed, comprehensive games in VR, *Half-Life: Alyx* tells a compelling story with riveting combat that shifts from explosive fire-fights to quietly disposing of zombies. Interacting with the environment in virtual space is amazingly done. There's nothing else like it.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Valve proves VR could very well be the future because nothing comes close to playing this game

2



Hitman 3

R1 250 / PSVR

Don the bald head and red tie of the world's greatest assassin and take out your targets with clean efficiency or sheer chaos. There's no better way to play the modern *Hitman* game than in VR.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Why be you when you can be Agent 47?

3



Star Wars: Squadrons

from R650 / Valve Index, Vive, Oculus

The closest you'll come to sitting in a real X-Wing cockpit and blowing up those dastardly enemy TIE fighters, *Star Wars: Squadrons* campaign and multiplayer is some of the most fun we've had in VR.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Nothing like the smell of photon torpedoes

4

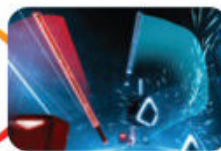


The Walking Dead: Saints and Sinners

★★★★★ R220 / PSVR, Oculus, Vive, Valve Index

Tense, violent and immersive, this is the best game adaption of *The Walking Dead*.

5



Beat Saber

★★★★★ from R175 / Oculus Rift, Vive, PSVR

Dual laser swords are meant for slicing and dicing blocks to the thumping beat of a song.



GoPro Hero10 Black

R11 000 / takealot.com

At a glance it's almost impossible to tell the Hero10 Black apart from its predecessor. Each is a little box with screens front and rear, and a lens housing that juts out. Under the hood, however, GoPro has truly levelled up its latest action camera – and much of that is down to the new GP2 processor. It's more responsive and captures better images in all lighting conditions, while 'nice to have' features (better livestreaming and webcam support, faster wireless and wired transfer of video) iron out some old issues.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Beefed-up internals make the Hero10 Black a nippy, powerful, polished action cam



Sony ZV-1

R16 800 / ormsdirect.co.za

Offering excellent image quality, a great range of video options and features designed specifically for vloggers on the go, Sony outdoes their previous compact camera, the RX-100. Our only issue is the lack of a touchscreen, which still blows our minds, and the battery being inaccessible if the camera is mounted. Yet those are small gripes with a piece of hardware that is one of the best available on the market and an easy recommend for anyone looking at investing in quality, portable cameras.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A tremendous compact camera that demonstrates how Sony is still at the top of the photography game



DJI Air 2S

R19 500 / dronegear.co.za

DJI's laurels remain assuredly un-rested-upon, and this may be its best drone yet: an almost perfect balance of portability, performance and price, ideal for novices but still able to produce high-on-pro-level results.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The best all-round camera drone on the market



Sony DSC-RX100 VI

R28 700 / ormsdirect.co.za

Sony is currently dominating the compact camera space. The RX100 VI is a tremendous device that would be even higher on this list if it weren't for that bulky price tag.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Premium point-and-shoot perfection



DJI Mini 2

R9 500 / capeunionmart.co.za

The follow-up to one of our faves is the Mini, but so much better. It brings 4K to a drone that still impresses with its size. For under 10K, this is an absolute win. Budding drone enthusiasts owe it to themselves to own one.

Stuff says ★★★★★

At this price, what you get is staggering



Panasonic Lumix TZ220

R16 700 / cameraland.co.za

This Panasonic compact is a significant upgrade from the TZ110, offering extra reach with the zoom lens, better colour reproduction, and an improved experience when using the electronic viewfinder.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Small, neat and not dramatically overpriced



DJI Osmo Action

★★★★★ R4 500 / takealot.com

Face-optimised metering makes DJI's action cam an ideal choice for vloggers.



Sony DSC-RX100 VII

★★★★★ R28 700 / ormsdirect.co.za

A true all-rounder that shoots 24fps at full resolution with a whopping 8x zoom lens.



DJI Mavic Air 2

★★★★★ R16 000 / incredible.co.za

A heap of pro features make this a viable cheaper option than the newer Air 2S.



Canon PowerShot G7X Mark III

★★★★★ R14 300 / camerawarehouse.co.za

For the asking price, this compact does everything you want and does it well.

1

HOT
BUY

UPDATE

TIPS & TRICKS

- It's easy to set up the X-T4's customisable Q button: just hold it down for a couple of seconds for options.
- Avoid those wonky horizons by turning on the built-in on-screen level in screen settings.
- Fujifilm X Acquire is a clever bit of PC/Mac software that backs up all your X-T4's custom settings.

**Fujifilm X-T4**

R24 600 (body) / ormsdirect.co.za

The Fuji X-T4 might be the high-end mirrorless camera of your dreams. Relatively affordable for a flagship, it excels at stills and video thanks to in-body image stabilisation, high-speed shooting and 4K recording at up to 60fps. Rapid shooting is backed up by fancy AF tricks that feel equally fast and reliable, and even the battery life goes above and beyond the usual standards. There's no doubting this is a worthy successor to the already fabulous X-T3.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A superbly capable mirrorless camera for shooting pretty much anything in style

**● NOW ADD THIS****Fujifilm XF 16-80mm f/4**

This versatile lens covers a bigger zoom range than most and adapts to pretty much any requirements. R12 400 / ormsdirect.co.za

2

UPDATE

**Fujifilm X-T3**

R17 900 (body) / ormsdirect.co.za

It may have been surpassed by the X-T4, but we still can't find anything bad to say about the X-T3 – it's just consistently great in so many ways. With pro-level video options, a high-res EVF, and super-fast autofocus and burst shooting, what you're getting here is an all-round beast of a camera in a small, beautiful form. And now that it's a last-gen model, it's also a lot cheaper than it used to be.

Stuff says ★★★★★

An incredible stills shooter with video smarts to match

3

UPDATE

**Sony A7 III**

R29 000 (body) / takealot.com

The A7 III manages to pack in a lot of technology and desirability for less than R50k. It's a fantastic all-rounder that's well suited to a bunch of shooting scenarios, coping well with landscapes, portraits, and even a little bit of high-speed sport shooting. As a camera design it's admittedly not the prettiest thing we've ever seen, but it handles well for its compact size.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A fantastic all-rounder that excels in low-light conditions

4

**Sony A7C**

★★★★★ R34 500 (body) / ormsdirect.co.za

The Sony A7C unites portability and precision into a very appealing package.

5

**Panasonic Lumix G9**

★★★★★ R24 900 (body) / camerawarehouse.co.za

The G9 is still the best Lumix to date, with staggering shooting speeds.

6

**Fujifilm X-T30**

★★★★★ R15 000 (body) / camerawarehouse.co.za

You get the X-T3's sensor in a cheaper, smaller body with more spare change for buying lenses.

7

**Fujifilm X-T200**

★★★★★ R14 600 (body) / camerawarehouse.co.za

A compact, lightweight and easy-to-master camera that won't break the bank.

8

**Canon EOS 90D**

★★★★★ R20 400 (body) / camerawarehouse.co.za

An updated all-rounder, the 90D builds on the 80D with increased power and more megapixels.

UPDATE

9

**Nikon Z6**

★★★★★ R29 700 (body) / takealot.com

A top-notch and reasonably sized mirrorless camera from the optical experts.

UPDATE

10

**Fujifilm GFX 100S**

★★★★★ R104 600 (body) / ormsdirect.co.za

Light for a medium-format camera, except maybe in the wallet area.

1

HOT BUY UPDATE



Sony WH-1000XM4

from R6 000 / takealot.com

With their perfect balance of wearability, active noise-cancelling prowess and audio performance, there just hasn't been a better package than the Sony XM3s... until now. The XM4s look and sound almost identical, but a range of new features – including Speak-to-Chat, which stops the music when you start talking – aims to lure you away from your current 'phones. If those are the XM3s, it's tough to justify the upgrade; but it's going to take something extraordinary to knock Sony off its perch now.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Not surprisingly given their heritage, these are the best all-round noise-cancelling headphones you can buy

1

HOT BUY UPDATE



Sony WF-1000XM4

R6 000 / incredible.co.za

Sony may catch flack for its phones but its audio gear is second to none. Serious cancellation skills, the inclusion of Speak-to-Chat and typically well-balanced sound reproduction make the WF-1000XM4s the in-ears to have. But, as with the over-ears, the previous generation was just so good that it's hard to recommend these if you already own our Number 2 pick. If you don't have a pair of Sony buds in your ears yet, though, these are the ones to have.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Similar innovations to those found in Sony's over-ears opposite put these wireless buds on top of the pile

2



B&W PX7 Carbon Edition

R6 900 / takealot.com

Bowers and Wilken make some fine headphones, but these are up there with some of its best. Stellar sound quality and a comfortable build make these an easy recommendation... if you can afford them.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A little pricey but worth every cent

UPDATE

2



Sony WF-1000XM3

R3 000 / hificorp.co.za

Despite the age of Sony's XM3's it's miraculous what these buds are capable of. They still feature some of the best noise cancelling in the business and continue to output some of the best audio in its field.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Amazing build and mind-blowing sound

UPDATE

3



Marshall Monitor II ANC

R6 200 / tecafrica.co.za

Marshall's amp-inspired design shines through with these headphones. They look fab, fold conveniently away and pump out great sound. Whether you're a musician or an avid music lover these will see you right.

Stuff says ★★★★★

So good, you'll want to turn them up to eleven

3



Bose QuietComfort Earbuds

from R6 900 / takealot.com

As so often happens, bigger, better features have knocked these 'buds down the list – not that there's a fault with these excellent, if bulky, in-ears. Noise cancelling is brilliant, but that price has got to come down.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Makes noise a victim of cancel culture

4



Bose NCH 700

★★★★★ from R9 000 / takealot.com

Bose are still the masters of the medium, if comparatively a little overpriced.

UPDATE

4



Sennheiser CX True Wireless

★★★★★ from R2 000 / takealot.com

Sennheiser's cans are always great, and those skills transferred to these excellent buds.

5



Apple AirPods Max

★★★★☆ from R9 500 / incredible.co.za

Sounds great but that price and their Apple-centric nature keeps them from greatness.

5



Jabra Elite 3

★★★★★ R1 500 / takealot.com

These may cut a few corners here and there, but they keep the bits that count.

1

HOT
BUY

UPDATE



Sonos Roam

R3 000 / takealot.com

Look, the Sonos Roam isn't the very best speaker you're going to encounter at this price point, but it's certainly one of the most skilled. Integrating with your other Sonos kit but equally capable on its own, the Roam loves to do just that. Well-rounded audio is a given and the battery is ample, if not the full ten hours Sonos claims to offer you. Sound Swap hands off to nearby speakers, Trueplay tunes to your space and it supports both Alexa and Google Assistant.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Sonos finally got a Move on, but even that has to make way for this portable powerhouse

1

HOT
BUY

UPDATE



Amazon Echo (4th Gen)

R1 270 / takealot.com

While this magic orb of a smart speaker looks like something you might see in an older *Star Trek* episode, the latest Echo from Amazon wins because it's just so efficient. Setting up connections between devices has never been simpler, thanks to an integrated Zigbee hub, and it's helped along by Amazon's excellent Routines app. It may not have omnidirectional speakers but that doesn't matter – you were just going to stick it in a corner anyway. Isn't that right?

Stuff says ★★★★★

While smart speakers are growing in popularity, Amazon is still way ahead of the pack

2



JBL Charge 5

from R3 000 / takealot.com

There's a lot to commend this portable sonic tube. It's compact enough to take anywhere, it'll last at least 20 hours on a charge, and you've got to try like heck to drown the thing. That'd be the IP67 rating talking.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Small package, big sound, loads of features

2



Google Nest Audio

R4 200 / superbalist.com

Google has refined its smart speaker with a sound that may be fuller but is still better suited to casual listening. It's fast and efficient but you should be aware that compatibility can be a problem.

Stuff says ★★★★★

While a little finicky, it's still an impressive device

3



Sonos Move

from R10 500 / takealot.com

Sonos' first mobile effort is still worth your time and money but the advent of the Beam means a Sonos portable is within reach for considerably less money. And money talks, they do say.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Beamed down to third, but still great

UPDATE

3



Apple HomePod Mini

from R2 400 / connecteddevices.co.za

While Siri is growing more competent with more and more updates, it's still not as advanced as Alexa or Google. Still, this smart speaker will do what you need and look good while it's at it.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Apple still has a way to go before it's competitive

UPDATE

4



UE Megaboom 3

★★★★★ R4 000 / takealot.com

You'll struggle to find a better, longer-lasting or more feature-laden portable speaker.

UPDATE

4



Sonos One

★★★★☆ R4 300 / hifcorp.co.za

Easily the best speaker quality available, we're just not fans of the chunky design.

UPDATE

5



JBL Xtreme 3

★★★★★ R5 000 / makro.co.za

The updated Xtreme has everything you could possibly need in a speaker.

5



Google Nest 2nd gen

★★★★☆ R2 600 / takealot.com

Sleep Sensing is cool, but that does mean you've got to stick it in the bedroom.

1

HOT
BUY

PlayStation 5

from R12 000 / koodoo.co.za

Next-gen is finally here and it's looking better than ever. The PlayStation 5 is a behemoth of a console and that size isn't just for show. Games load faster and look better than ever before thanks to the new solid state drive and the actual machine is quieter than ever. Then there's the DualSense 5 controller which is just... monumentally cool. Alongside a stellar lineup of launch games, Sony has really outdone itself with its latest console, justifying that price tag. The PS5 is an amazing console all round.

Stuff says ★★★★★

An amazing controller and some solid launch titles make for a great kick off to next-gen gaming

2



Xbox Series X

R12 000 / takealot.com

Microsoft's new console is a beast of a bit of hardware. It's also a far better proposition than it was at launch. Games Pass is a solid investment, making this a far closer race than it was a year ago.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Much more worthy of your time now

3



Nintendo Switch

from R7 000 / store.nintendo.co.za

Nintendo's console earned a promotion in our list after it impressed us with a growing list of fantastic games. Plus, no other device here offers the joy of portable gaming. Long journeys will never be boring again.

Stuff says ★★★★★

This 2-in-1 console is the real deal

UPDATE

4



PlayStation 4 Pro

★★★★★ from R6 500 / allgamingconsoles.co.za

A great all round console with one of the best libraries of games in recent memory.

5



Nintendo Switch Lite

★★★★★ from R4 500 / store.nintendo.co.za

Yeah, it's a tiny bit smaller. But it's also cheaper and just as powerful as its big bro.

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www.stuff.co.za/stuffed/ or anchor.fm/stuffsa

1

HOT
BUY

UPDATE

Deathloop

from R1 070 / PC, PS5

What if you were caught in the same day, over and over again, until you completed an almost impossible task? That's the idea behind *Deathloop* – players become Colt; an assassin tasked with killing the eight Visionaries causing the time loop he's trapped in. The creators of *Dishonored* and *Prey* combine parkour, stealth, gunplay, and movement skill to create this highly unusual first-person shooter. There's also a wholly optional multiplayer aspect.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Groundhog Day meets violence, with some excellent writing behind it



● **OR PLAY THIS**

Hades

Looping gameplay, almost perfectly executed. A previous Stuff Game of the Year winner. R150 / PC, PS4, Xbox One, Switch

● **TIPS & TRICKS**

When you first start playing, follow the story until you unlock Residium. Once there, and you're able to save items, you can branch out and start exploring.

Pay attention to the time of day. Moving areas will advance time, and each area behaves differently depending on what time of day it is.

2



Psychonauts 2

from R330 / PC, PS4, Xbox One

This excellent sequel from the mind of Tim Schafer has players take the role of new psychonaut Razputin "Raz" Aquato as he enters the minds of others to do battle. Why, you ask? He resolves their mental problems and emotional baggage, of course.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A splendidly charming sequel that does the original justice

3

UPDATE



Ratchet and Clank: Rift Apart

R1 370 / PS5

Sony's exclusive is an amazingly visual tale that travels back and forth between galaxies and dimensions. Madcap weapons, unlikely scenarios and high-energy hijinks mark this PS5 showcase as an experience that needs to be played by everyone.

Stuff says ★★★★★

So much fun you'll feel like you're in a parallel universe

4

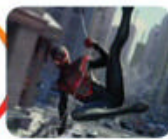


Returnal

★★★★★ R1 370 / PS5

This rouge-like was a serious contender for 2021's GotY. It's still an amazing play.

5



Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales

★★★★★ R1 200 / PS5

Do whatever a spider can in this stunning sequel featuring a new protagonist.

6

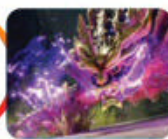


Hitman 3

★★★★★ from R1 000 / PC, PS, Xbox

The end of the line for 47, but the end of the line for many, many victims first.

7

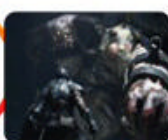


Monster Hunter: Rise

★★★★★ R1 100 / Switch

Monster Hunter is back to its handheld roots with excellent combat and polished loot grind.

8



Demon's Souls

★★★★★ R1 370 / PS5

As difficult as it is beautiful, *Demon's Souls* is a joy to play and eventually defeat.

9

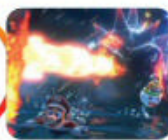


The Last of Us Part II

★★★★★ R720 / PS4

An emotional story punctuated by savage gameplay; this is still the best recent PS4 title.

10



Super Mario 3D World + Bowser's Fury

★★★★★ R1 200 / Switch

An excellent port and expansion on one of the most underrated Super Mario games.

No tanks

Star Wars almost caused an international incident when a tank-like Sandcrawler prop was left near the Tunisia/Libya border and Gaddafi took a dislike to it. Maybe he was more of a Trekkie.



RANDOM ACCESS MEMORIES 1977

STAR WARS

Star Wars? Urgh! They ruined my childhood with their crap sequels.

If you grew up with the original trilogy, no doubt it seared itself onto your young mind forever... yet the magic goes beyond those three movies. That we're talking 45 years later about a fantasy flick released in the late 1970s is testament to the incredible world George Lucas and chums created – but it's also driven by the way it's remained in people's minds through all the newer films and shows. That said, *Stuff* will admit to pulling faces at some of the Special Edition changes. And Han definitely shot first.

You see? That's the point! The original trilogy was perfection. The rest is garbage!

We get that some people protect those films with zeal, but they weren't perfect. A *New Hope* exists in a universe bereft of women. Luke and Leia's continuity clearly wasn't fleshed out by *Empire*, because otherwise... ick. And *Jedi* starred a rabble of violent teddy bears in a kind of cartoonish farce. And that's before you consider some of the dialogue. Still, things could have been worse: Yoda was almost played by a monkey in a mask, until everyone came to their senses and enlisted the Muppets folks. A near miss, that was.

Whatever. I'd prefer a monkey in a Yoda suit to kids on flying Vespas!

Fine, we get it. You hated *The Force Awakens* casting a female lead. You raged as *The Last Jedi* dared to confound expectations. You fumed as *The Book Of Boba Fett* reinvented the character so much it could have been called *The Book Of Getting Repeatedly Beaten Up By Sand People*. And yes, those bikes... but giving *Star Wars* space to breathe also led to *The Mandalorian* and the *Obi-Wan* series. And if you don't care for them either, remember that the films you love are still, to quote author James M Cain, right there on the shelf.

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